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The first of these is the fact that the  
 government has been unable to  
 maintain a stable currency. This  
 has led to a loss of confidence  
 in the government and a  
 consequent loss of support  
 from the people. The second  
 is the fact that the government  
 has been unable to maintain  
 a stable economy. This has  
 led to a loss of confidence  
 in the government and a  
 consequent loss of support  
 from the people. The third  
 is the fact that the government  
 has been unable to maintain  
 a stable society. This has  
 led to a loss of confidence  
 in the government and a  
 consequent loss of support  
 from the people.



SPHERE  
AND  
DUTIES  
OF  
WOMAN.









THE BRIDE

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Sphere and Duties  
OF  
WOMAN,

BY  
George W. Burnap,

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Baltimore: Murphy & Co.

1852.



THE  
Sphere and Duties  
OF  
WOMAN:  
A  
COURSE OF LECTURES

BY  
GEORGE W. BURNAP.

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*Fifth Edition, Corrected and Enlarged.*

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NEW YORK  
1847  
1847



TO THE  
LADIES OF BALTIMORE,  
*These Lectures,*  
WRITTEN FOR THEIR ENTERTAINMENT,  
ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,  
BY THE AUTHOR.







## PREFACE.



THESE lectures were intended as, in some measure, a counterpart to the course I gave the winter before the last to Young Men. It may naturally be asked why they were not all confined, as those Lectures were, to one class? The audience in the first case was unmixed, but in the second composed of both sexes; and although it was my intention to devote a greater part of the course to the Sphere and Duties of Woman, I thought it equitable to select such subjects for a part of it as would be equally interesting to all. I chose therefore for the last three lectures topics of a literary and philosophical cast, in which every mind has an equal interest, and which I supposed best calculated to improve the taste and cultivate the intellect. My only regret, on looking over these sheets, is to perceive how imperfectly my limits have permitted me to present some of the most important views. There is scarcely a topic I have treated, which might not be expanded into a volume.

The exhaustless resources which are opening upon society in public lectures, is a subject which is worthy of a more minute and extended development. This system is destined, I have not the least doubt, to work great changes in society. It will demonstrate what with me has ever been a favorite theory, the compatibility of daily toil with intellectual cultivation. Since writing these lectures I have seen a publication called the "Lowell Offering," composed entirely by the factory girls, which amply corroborates all I have ever thought or said upon this subject. No man can read that periodical, and say that daily labor has any tendency to degrade or enfeeble the mind, to debase or chill the heart.

There are some topics which I was obliged altogether to omit, the physical education of woman, and her political rights. The first of these may be said to belong more especially to the physi-





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There are some topics which I was obliged altogether to omit, the physical education of woman, and her political rights. The first of these may be said to belong more especially to the physi-

cian, and the second to the jurist. But they both belong to the philanthropist, and are to be discussed rather by appeals to common sense, than to the technicalities of science. The substitution of machinery for manual labor has superseded a vast amount of physical exertion, and exempted thousands of women from that muscular action which is indispensable to health. The inevitable consequence is a deterioration of health, and other consequent evils of an alarming character. The attention of the community must ere long be called to this matter. The political rights of women have been often discussed, but generally without either wisdom or moderation on either side. That they ought to aspire to the right of suffrage, cannot, I think, be maintained, but that better provision ought to be made to secure to them their property, I have no doubt.

BALTIMORE, May, 1841.

P R E F A C E  
TO THE SECOND EDITION.



THE first edition of this work having been some time out of print, and a second being resolved on, the author took the opportunity to add two new lectures, on the "PRESERVATION OF HEALTH," and the "RIGHTS OF WOMAN." By the suggestion of a few timely thoughts on these subjects, he hopes to increase the value and usefulness of a book, which has already met a favorable reception from the public.



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## LECTURE I.

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### INTRODUCTORY.



THE favorable reception of the course of lectures, which I gave last winter to the young men of Baltimore, has encouraged me to attempt something of a similar nature during the approaching season, embracing a wider range of topics, and addressed to the citizens at large. The ultimate object of both is the same, the promotion of the cause of moral, intellectual, and literary culture. I shall touch in the present course on most of the social relations, but I shall devote a portion of it especially to THE SPHERE AND DUTIES OF WOMAN.

The success of the lectures of the last winter was gratifying to me personally, for I do not

profess to be above the weaknesses of our common nature. But it was gratifying to me for higher reasons, as refuting the imputation so often thrown upon our city, and so long acquiesced in by ourselves, that no literary enterprise could be sustained among us.

In speaking of the literary spirit and institutions of Baltimore, before any thing is said to their disparagement in comparison with those of her eastern sisters, it ought to be recollected by how many years they are her elders. Long after the Puritans had laid the foundations of Boston, and at the very outset made the amplest provision for literary culture, the sea-bird ranged undisturbed along the shore where now stands our noble city. The ships of an extensive commerce had begun to lash the waves of the Hudson before the waters of our river had been disturbed by a single keel. Philadelphia had her Franklin and her Rittenhouse, while the corn was yet waving on the spot where we are now assembled. Literature is the growth of time, of wealth and leisure. Without these conditions it cannot exist, and it is vain and unreasonable to expect it. But if our city have not the culture of age, she has the charm, the vivacity, and artlessness of youth. If she have

not the accomplishments of the mind which belong to older communities, she certainly has the attraction of a warm and unsophisticated heart. The former will come with the lapse of years, and happy will she be if the latter be not proportionably destroyed.

What is true of our city when compared with her seniors on this continent, is true of our whole country when compared with the nations of the old world. Our national literature is in its infancy. We have no vast libraries where profound investigations can be made. We have no such race of men as scholars by profession. We are essentially a practical people. We are too busy in improving our physical condition to take much interest in any thing else. So much is it so, that no sooner does a man of genius appear among us, than he is bought up and set to work in the drudgery of politics or commerce, or poverty drives him to waste his divine powers in some prison-house, grinding out the vile meal of every day life, or to perish in making sport for the lords of the Philistines. Poetry, that great awakener of the intellect of a people, has scarcely appeared amongst us. Though certainly a sensitive and imaginative people, our native poets have found but little encourage-

ment. Our community of language with England has probably operated against us in this respect. The task of competing with Shakspeare and Byron seems too gigantic to afford any hope of success. These two bards alone seem to despairing genius to have exhausted human nature, the common field of imaginative composition, and to have left nothing to be said. But it is not so. When the cry was raised that the world had grown old, and the human mind in these latter days had become exhausted and effete, Byron arose and confuted the calumny. So it will be here. The human mind is always equal to itself. Some poet will yet arise among us worthy to describe our noble scenery, and breathing the spirit of our free institutions. How many mute inglorious Miltons have already descended to the tomb we do not know, many doubtless who might have written their names on the same tablet with the most renowned of the old world. But in a population of twenty millions, soon to be swelled to fifty, renewing itself three times a century, it is impossible that the combination of genius, industry, and opportunity, which develops the consummate poet, should not at length occur, and when he does appear, he will be received

not to doubtful disputation, but welcomed with gratitude, and reverence, and joy.

We must, we shall have a national literature. We already number several of the best writers of the English prose, and some of the deepest and most philosophical thinkers who have ever used our mother tongue: Here thought stands the best chance of being original. I sometimes think that it is not so great a disadvantage that our philosophers cannot immure themselves in libraries, and bury themselves in books. We see man under new aspects, to which the records of the past furnish no parallel. We cannot see man as he is, through the medium of what he has been, even were that medium not as it is, misty and obscure. The burning of the Alexandrian library was not so great a loss perhaps as it has been sometimes described. All wisdom does not lie in the past, and if scholars, instead of consuming their lives in learning by what names the Greeks and Romans called this and that, would go forth into the world and use their own eyes, and ears, and understandings, as these very men did whose works they study with so much reverence, they would be wiser in the end.

I am not wanting however, I would be understood, in reverence for the past. But I must



value it for what it has, and not for what it has not. I value antiquity for its facts, but for its opinions I cannot entertain any profound respect. There is a fallacy in the very language, when we speak of antiquity as being venerable and authoritative because it has the advantage of age and maturity, and therefore likely to have arrived at the perfection of wisdom. The very opposite is the fact. We are the old age and the maturity of the world, rather than the generations that have preceded us. The mature man does not refer to the opinions of his youth with any special reverence, merely because they were his opinions. He feels that a wider experience, and deeper reflection have compelled him to change many of them. Just so it is in the progress of the world. The profoundest wisdom can come only from the widest induction of particulars. It is irrational then to adopt the conclusions of even wiser men than ourselves, who lived long ago, when the materials from which we may make up an independent judgment are multiplied a hundred fold. Plato had a profound and a far reaching intellect, improved by much observation and deep reflection. But his opinions on politics are now of very little value, because the condition of the world has totally

changed since his day. Since his times we have had the additional experience of many ages. All that he could possibly know of that science must have been derived from the few small states of Greece, and from a little knowledge of Egypt and Chaldea. The records of the past, to which he had access, were only a few uncertain traditions extending a few ages into the realms of barbarism and utter night. What could he know of the working of a republican government under all possible circumstances, when all that he could have learned of it was derived from a few little communities which a man might travel over in a day. The line of his wisdom would extend but a little way to sound the deep problems which are involved in the operations of a free government, extending over a territory greater than were in his times the whole domains of civilization, penetrated and bound together by canals and rail roads, and above all enlightened by the emanations of ten thousand printing presses.

I cannot believe, if I would, with the ancients, that the world is an extended plain, stretching out under a sky of infinite extent, because I know that it has been circumnavigated. I have seen the men who have stood on the opposite

surface. While I admire the eloquence of Cicero, I cannot look into the starry heavens, and believe with him, that the heavenly bodies are minute objects set in concentric spheres of glass, making a most delicious music as they revolve, but to which our ears have unfortunately become too much accustomed to be sensible to its harmonies. If in the ruins of Pompeii or Herculaneum, there should by chance be discovered a treatise by one of the wisest sages of Greece or Rome on commerce and navigation, whom can we suppose it would enlighten? What practical man would even read it, when he knows that all the science it could contain would be derived from the limited range of the Mediterranean, and that he might employ the same time to more advantage in tracing the mighty progress of trade since the discovery of the mariner's compass has thrown open all nations and all climes to the enterprise of man? The world then is not growing old in the sense of verging to decay. The twilight of the past generation is the dawn of a new and brighter day. Every new generation commences existence under better auspices, for it enters upon the world, not only rich in itself, but laden with the spoils of all past time. Thousands have thought

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and contrived, millions have labored for what we now enjoy.

Existence now in any civilized portion of the globe is worth far more than it ever was before. That naked animal, who once roamed the woods in utter destitution, is now born to a happier and more bountiful lot. The young eyes which now look on life, what a different prospect do they behold from that which those beheld who were born three thousand, nay three hundred years ago! Three hundred years ago and what was Europe, the most civilized portion of the globe? A family of half civilized nations just emerging from barbarism, its kings and queens worse lodged and worse fed than the poorest class of citizens now in these United States. The power to read was so uncommon and so precious that it rendered its possessor too valuable to be touched for almost any crime. The haughty nobles even, were under the necessity of signing their mark in all their legal instruments, as the poor Indians now do in making their treaties in our western wilds. A community of readers and writers was as little dreamed of in those days, as a community of angels in the human form.

The progress of the human race from its cradle in the East, has been one triumphal march of

improvement. What has been achieved in the last three thousand years is most strikingly exhibited when the circle has come fully round the earth, and English science, art and civilization meet and measure strength with Asiatic science, art, and civilization as it was when an overgrown population and a corrupt religion set bounds to all improvement. What an encounter is that, when the English man-of-war points its thunders against a whole fleet of the clumsy and ill contrived shipping of the Celestial Empire! What an encounter would that be, were an English army with her mortars and battering apparatus to be drawn up before the walls of Canton, defended by an undisciplined multitude, armed with matchlocks, and bows and arrows. Whatever is England's is ours. Nay, disencumbered of her feudal institutions, we have been enabled to carry out some of her noblest principles to a perfection from which she has been precluded. Property is here more equally distributed, and education more generally diffused. The consequence is, a greater elevation of the popular mind.

I was most forcibly impressed with the peculiar character of an American citizen, his intelligence and distinguishing thirst for knowledge

above all other people, by an incident which took place during a late sojourn at the North. I was visiting a large manufacturing establishment, and one of the workmen was pointed out to me as having been sent to Russia to set up a cotton mill. My companion engaged him in conversation, and made enquiries as to his experience in the realms of the Autocrat. Among other things, he asked him why he did not stay there, as he received a large salary, and was the head of the establishment. How could he abandon so eligible a situation, and come back to be a subordinate at home, with a comparatively small compensation. "Well," said he, "I did not like it; I had nobody to speak to, and besides, I could not get my newspapers." There spoke the American. He had rather forego wealth and station than his newspapers. And with such a nation of readers can we be long without a national literature? It is utterly impossible. At Athens eloquence reached the greatest perfection that it has ever attained in the world, because Athens was the freest and most intelligent community of all antiquity. All classes listened to the public harangues, and the most eloquent was the most powerful man in the state. The very fish women were critics of a

classical pronunciation. The same causes operate here in ten-fold intensity, to produce the most perfect literature that has ever existed,—ten millions of intelligent readers, ready to bestow applause, and power, and wealth on him who will most thoroughly enlighten their understandings, and most deeply move their hearts. Some of the speeches of Mr. Webster were perused by more eyes, and thrilled more hearts within three weeks of their delivery, than any of the orations of Cicero in three centuries from their publication, though they had the whole range of the Roman empire. And I will add, that nothing he ever wrote was more worthy to be transmitted to the latest posterity than some of the productions of our most distinguished orator, advocate, jurist, and statesman.

What is the augury of the phenomenon which is here exhibited this evening, and which is seen in every lecture room in this country? What means the fact that the theatres are almost forsaken, and beauty and fashion, the man of business, and the man of pleasure, are seen to throng the halls of scientific and literary entertainment? There they patiently listen to what would once have been called a dry lecture, the very name of which would have filled them with

unutterable disgust. What is it but the evidence of the onward progress of man and of the age? Theatres seem to have had their day. They appear to be falling into hopeless neglect. But they have not been written down, nor preached down. They could not have been. The taste for them is outgrown. Bad as some things are about them, I have no doubt that they have providentially played their part in the progressive civilization of the world. In the age of Shakspeare they long struggled with, and finally superseded the coarser and brutalizing sports of bull fighting and bear baiting. Was not this an improvement, I would ask those who most severely censure the theatre, and call it, as it too often is, the vestibule of perdition, was it not a gain to collect the crowd which gathered around two fierce animals goring each other to death, or a brace of dogs tearing in pieces their chained and imprisoned victim, there to become excited themselves to blows and blasphemy,—was it no gain to bring them within the walls of a theatre, to be subjected at least to the first lessons of order and decorum, to listen to some of the sublimest flights of human eloquence, instead of the growls and bellowings of the ring? It is in vain to expect mankind to step at one stride from



barbarism to refinement, from heathen debasement to Christian morality. All the intermediate stages must be passed through, each better than the last, but defective when compared with that which succeeds. The rude sports of the bear garden were moral and moralizing when compared with the horrible spectacles of the Roman Amphitheatre, where human beings instead of wild beasts were made to butcher each other for the amusement of the populace. When we complain, and justly complain of the theatre as falling so far below the standard of morality exhibited by Christianity, we ought to recollect that it has succeeded such scenes as that so admirably described by a modern poet.

“I see before me the Gladiator lie :—  
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow  
Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—  
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
Like the first of a thunder-shower ; and now  
The arena swims around him—he is gone,  
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the  
wretch who won.  
He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes  
Were with his heart, and that was far away.

He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,  
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,  
*There* were his young barbarians all at play,  
*There* was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,  
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—  
All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he expire  
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!”

The stage then, though comparatively an evil, and perhaps at this period of the world absolutely so, has been comparatively a good. It has contributed to intellectualize if not to moralize mankind. Such a mind as that of Shakspeare does not fall without the circle of Divine Providence. Such a fervid genius as his, showing up man to himself, has not failed to kindle thought in others, and to unlock secrets in the hearts of the unreflecting, which otherwise would have remained for ever undisclosed.

There are at the present period strong indications that either the taste, or the moral sense of the age, is leaving the theatre behind. The mind in its progress from childhood to maturity ceases to seek for mere amusement, and asks to be instructed as well as entertained. As the mature man, who once delighted in toys and tales of the marvellous, forsakes the nursery and the play ground to find more solid satisfaction in

the serious business of life, in the halls of legislation, or the marts of commerce, so the time will at length come, nay, we believe it has come already, when mankind putting away childish things will find their highest pleasure in the pursuit of knowledge; they will forsake the gaudy shows of the theatre for the higher pleasures of the intellect. As they become more and more intellectual beings, so will they take more and more delight in intellectual and moral pleasures, in exercising and strengthening the powers of the mind, in exploring the inexhaustible wonders of the universe, the great laws of physical science, the phenomena of the starry heavens, the productions and appearances of the different continents and climates of the earth, the habits and the instincts of animals, the structure and composition of our globe, the physical, intellectual, and moral constitution of man, the nature and fundamental laws of civil society, the history of our race, the evidences of its progressive civilization, the fortunes and achievements of the most famous and conspicuous of our species. All these things are capable of being made the subjects of popular lectures of the most interesting nature. And sooner or later, I have no doubt, that they will awaken the

curiosity and engage the intellectual activity of mankind. Education will no longer be considered as terminating with youth, when the mental powers are still green and undeveloped, but will be continued as long as curiosity retains its thirst for knowledge, and memory retains the power of treasuring it up in the mind. Almost every subject of science; and of art, of literature and taste, may in this way, by the endless diversity of powers and pursuits of those who devote themselves to letters, be brought before the public and made to minister a high gratification, while they increase the general stock of information. The materials from which such lectures may be drawn, allowing nothing to the lecturer but the power of selection and combination, are absolutely inexhaustible. The scholar even, whose days and nights are devoted to study, is overwhelmed by the exuberant stores which have been poured into the common treasury of science and literature within the last seventy years. With the increase of wealth and physical resources which has been every where going on, there has been a vast accession to the number of the laborers in the walks of literature and science. Intellectual activity has been immeasurably increased. The civilized world has re-

sembled a hive of bees. Some have remained at home building the repositories, arranging in order and for use the results of the labors of others. Another portion have spread themselves abroad over the whole surface of the earth, from the burning sands of the torrid zone, to the eternal ice of either pole, and scarce any thing has escaped their investigation.

What remains, but that the labors of the few be made the common property of all? To what purpose is it, that this vast amount of information is spread out upon the dumb pages of a book, and laid up in the alcoves of libraries, while the great mass of the people are ignorant even of its existence? Let it have a voice, and come forth, and be communicated to the people, where alone it can accomplish an object worthy of the zeal and disinterestedness of those noble spirits, who have devoted themselves to the cause of science and letters.

It is with this purpose that I have stepped aside from the common routine of my profession, and undertaken the task of addressing my fellow citizens on the more general subjects of Moral, Intellectual, and Literary Culture. There is, I am persuaded, in this and every community, a vast field of mind which lies barren for the

simple reason that it lies untilled. There is a vast amount of time which passes away unimproved, simply for the want of excitement and opportunity. There is a vast deal of our social existence wasted on trifles, because we have neglected to store our minds with solid knowledge. The power of thinking, I regret to say it, the noblest of all the powers conferred on man, is the very one which he is most apt to wrap up in a napkin and bury in the earth. Extensive knowledge, accurate thought, and eloquent expression, how much they are praised, how much they are admired, what power do they confer of ministering pleasure to others! But it seems to be taken for granted that they are original gifts, and not the fruit of careful training and cultivation. Nothing can be more mistaken. They are in a degree within the reach of all.

These powers I believe public lectures to be eminently calculated to cultivate and call forth. There is something in the living voice, which awakens attention more than silent reading can do, which calls up more vigorously the intellectual faculties, and produces a more lasting impression upon the memory. The excitement of the occasion and of sympathy, clothes a subject with a greater importance than when contem-

plated in silence and in solitude. The subject thus introduced abides longer in the mind, it becomes a topic of conversation and discussion. If it has been treated with any degree of ability, those who have listened understand it better than they did before. They feel more curiosity to hear each other's opinions. They of course can discuss it with greater clearness and satisfaction. When they read any thing relating to the same subject, it has for them new interest, and they will probably be induced to procure the books which will give them a more complete and thorough knowledge of it. Now such investigations, when the curiosity is once roused, become the source of intense immediate gratification as well as permanent improvement. They give a pleasing play to the faculties, for nothing is sweeter to the soul than the acquisition of knowledge, the discovery of truth, the consciousness that it has a clearer and more satisfactory view of any subject than it once had. It feels ennobled, elevated in the scale of intellectual beings, and deems existence itself to be worth more than it was before.

Public lectures, moreover, may be defended on a much lower principle of interest and expediency, on the principle so well known in

Political Economy under the name of the division of labor. It is much more easy to receive knowledge through the ear than through the eye. It is much more easy for many to listen while one discourses than for each to read the same amount for himself. It is certainly less labor for one to investigate, select, and condense for the benefit of a multitude, than for each one to go over the same ground. There is no way in which mind can be so easily cultivated, and knowledge propagated so fast.

If mind be the great distinction of man over the lower orders of animals with which he inhabits the earth, so the cultivation of the mind must be the main superiority of one human being over another. The cultivation of the mind is an inexhaustible source of happiness. To the pleasures of thought and meditation there is absolutely no end. It refines and renders more intense, safe, and enduring the innocent pleasures of the senses. It frees the soul from one of its chief dangers, that of dependence upon coarse and animal gratifications. The cultivated mind can never feel the burden of solitude, nor can it be overwhelmed in a crowd. Among the multitude, its powers of observation, disciplined by careful training, find the very object they most



delight to contemplate, human nature in its infinite developments,—and the naturalist cannot feel more delight among glittering diamonds and precious stones. It reads with rapid glance, and curiosity never sated, the great volume of mankind. If it leaves the haunts of man, and go where no foot hath trod, it is not alone. Nature herself is to it an Infinite Presence. The cultivated mind, prepared for such communings, finds in a higher consciousness, the intensest pleasures of our being. Nay, let the day withdraw her shining, let darkness hide every object from the sight, and wrap the earth in the profoundest gloom, let every eye be closed and animated nature sleep as it were in one universal grave, to the cultivated mind the waking hour has no terrors, it knows no sadness, the deepest midnight is the hour of the most exalted meditation. Time and space are almost annihilated, the past is present, the distant is brought near, and the soul, freed from every tie, seems even now an inhabitant of eternity and immensity. It feels with the poet that,

“Night is the time to think,—  
When from the eye the soul  
Takes flight, and on the utmost brink  
Of yonder starry pole,

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Discerns beyond the abyss of night  
The dawn of uncreated light."

It is by the constant accession of cultivated minds that society is gradually to improve, and its pleasures to be augmented. There is no companionship like that which is created by wisdom and knowledge. In that delightful intercourse, hours are but as minutes, days fly like hours away. These pleasures are in a measure open to all. Once mankind were bound down to toil. Their whole energies were exhausted in supplying their commonest wants. Now they have pressed into their service the great agencies of nature, fire, and water, and air, and while they are accomplishing their appointed tasks, men may resort to the halls of science, and the galleries of art, the lecture rooms of philosophy and literature. In our republic in short, the grove of Academus is to be revived, and there will be seen walking in it, not a few philosophers alone, but the whole mass of the people.

Permit me, ladies and gentlemen, to congratulate you on the signs we see multiplying around us of the rise and progress of a literary spirit in our city. It gave me the sincerest pleasure to hear that another course of lectures was to be

commenced for this season, enlisting so much and such a variety of talent, learning and taste. To that enterprise I shall gladly contribute, if the one in which I myself have engaged does not promise to consume all the time I can with propriety divert from the duties of an arduous profession. We, who have embarked in these experiments, call upon all good men and true to come to our aid. There is nothing more wanted to give an impulse to the onward progress of our city than a higher literary and scientific culture, than institutions of a public character, which shall bring the mind and talent of the community into closer contact and warmer sympathy, and thus enable them to act with greater power and efficiency on the mass. We have a climate unsurpassed in the world, and a position second to few on the continent. There must grow up here a large and splendid city. Let it not be a vast, barbarian, unintelligent body, but animated by a great, a noble, a cultivated soul.

We call upon the ministers of religion. Every thing which spreads abroad light and intelligence is congenial with their great purpose of enlightening and reforming the world. Christianity, kept back from mankind through four thousand years of barbarism, was reserved for the

fulness of time, when the world should have become sufficiently cultivated to receive and perpetuate a spiritual religion ; and every thing now which developes the intellect, and makes man a being of thought and reflection, instead of a creature of the senses, prepares him more thoroughly to comprehend, and more deeply to be affected by those divine words which are spirit and life.

We call upon the patriot to aid us, the patriot who must be more and more convinced by the experience of every year, that the fate of our republic is entirely involved in the problem, whether a people spread over so vast an extent of territory, increasing with unexampled rapidity, and receiving into its bosom each year nearly a hundred thousand of foreign ingredients, can be made and kept sufficiently intelligent to govern themselves and secure their own happiness. We ask him to reflect on the melancholy spectacle of a great nation, overflowing with wealth, with physical comfort and every natural resource, but without taste, without literature, without refinement, degraded by ignorance, and engulfed in the pleasures of the senses. We ask them if the delusion is never to be dispelled, that life is to be

spent in dull drudgery, to acquire the means of living, without the least reflection how those means are to be used in procuring the greatest possible enjoyment? We ask him if there is to be but one pursuit over the length and breadth of this land, absorbing and subordinating to itself every other, the pursuit of wealth, which, when accumulated, can be enjoyed only in precise proportion to the enlargement of the mind, and the cultivation of the taste?

We invoke the aid and encouragement of parents, who are connected with the future by bright hopes, as well as with the past by tender recollections. While you gaze with unutterable love upon your rising offspring, and realize whose blood runs in their veins, whose name they are to inherit, does there arise no solicitude in your breasts how they shall bear their part in the great line of existence, what standing they shall assume among men of sense and education, how they may be inspired with high aims and noble purposes, how secured from low pursuits and vicious indulgences? Be assured that next to true religion there is no other guaranty so certain for their safety, their prosperity, their honorable career through life, as an early and

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decided taste for moral, intellectual, and literary culture. In this young, free, and enterprising country, where change is written so legibly on all things, nothing can be more chimerical than the hope of transmitting family distinction sustained only by wealth. The genius of our institutions is altogether against it. No where has Mind obtained a supremacy so entire. Wealth may here be an accessory, and a comfortable appendage to greatness, but the estimation of humanity is too high among us to make a man a mere appendage to his possessions.

Finally we appeal to woman, in whose heart every enterprise for human good is sure to find a warm and a powerful advocate. When we tell her that the cause in which we are engaged, is the endeavor to elevate and refine our species, she recognises it as the cause in which she has ever been engaged since the beginning of time. When we describe to her a state of higher mental and moral culture, and of course accompanying it a greater refinement of manners and correctness of deportment, she welcomes the prospect as a state of things where her gentle virtues will be best appreciated, and the sphere in which she moves be most replete with honor, happiness, and contentment. We do not flatter

her when we remind her how much influence she has in forming the taste and directing the pursuits of the other sex, how far the hope of her favor determines the aspirations and the efforts of those who are forming characters for life. She needs not be assured, that it is for her own sake that we invite her into the pleasant walks of letters, that there is nothing more congenial with her retired and quiet occupations, no better solace for her solitary hours, no better resource against ennui and depression, nothing which so prepares her to adorn and enjoy society, nothing, except piety, which can so arm her against those troubles which are the lot of all.

Let her know that there is nothing which rules by diviner right than woman, and there is nothing to which the human heart more involuntarily bows down than to woman when she adds to the natural charms and loveliness of her sex, the crowning glory of a vigorous, a refined, and cultivated intellect.



## LECTURE II.

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### ON THE SPHERE AND DUTIES OF WOMAN.



HAVE promised to devote a portion of this course of lectures to the SPHERE AND DUTIES OF WOMAN. Meditation upon the subject, while it has more and more opened to me its magnitude and importance, has more and more convinced me of the difficulty of treating it with profit to you, or credit to myself. While I addressed my own sex, I felt at home and at ease. As all I said was drawn from my own experience and observation, I knew my ground and felt sure at every step. I felt that what I said could not be mistaken or misjudged. I could not be suspected even of being any other than just and fair. I am now to address the other sex, a task which I had much



rather had fallen to one of themselves. The very circumstances of the case render it impossible for me to be ~~as well acquainted~~ with my subject as I was before. I cannot even in imagination put myself in the position of the opposite half of the species, and though I may form a judgment of what their conduct should be, I cannot comprehend the difficulties of their situation, nor fully appreciate their merit when they fill up the measure of my conceptions of right and duty, nor their culpability when they fall below it.

What I hope to do is this, to lead those who listen to me to serious reflection, to give them a more thorough knowledge of their constitution, faculties, aptitudes, a clearer conception of their relative position, and the duties which grow out of it, those dispositions and habits which it is incumbent on them to cherish, the studies they are to pursue, the accomplishments they are to acquire, in short how they are to demean themselves in the successive relations of daughter, sister, wife, mother, friend, neighbor, Christian, the heir of immortality. To produce a systematic treatise on the Sphere and Duties of Woman is not my purpose. I have neither the leisure nor the ability to do it. All that I can hope to do is

to drop here and there a hint, which will awaken thought and reflection, which ripened by time and confirmed by experience, will mature into true and solid wisdom.

The question has been raised, and often discussed, whether the original intellectual endowments of woman are as great, or rather the same as those of man. Both sides of the argument have been defended with equal zeal and pertinacity. It is a question however which never can be settled, and which it is unimportant to decide one way or the other. It is a question to which the human powers are inadequate. All souls come from God and are made for immortality. The distinction of the sexes is intended for this world alone, a point only in the infinite line of the soul's existence. It does not seem probable that the Deity would make a difference in favor of one half of his rational creation, and to the disadvantage of the other, which should be radical and essential, for the sake of a relation that is to endure but for a short season. It is certain, however, that the manifestations of mind depend much on physical organization, and still more on education. The difference of organization was to be very great, particularly in the nervous system, which is the very seat of the

mind. Education contributes even more to this difference. Habits of life seem to have the power of overcoming even the disparity of physical organization. In some ages and countries the labors which are appropriate to men have been imposed by their tyranny upon the weaker sex, and what a difference does it immediately produce! What a contrast between the delicate daughter of a city and the wife of a peasant, who shares with him in the labors of the field. The same hand, which in the gilded saloon touches the musical instrument with so much grace,

“In notes, with many a winding bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,  
Untwisting all the charms which tie  
The hidden soul of harmony;”

if condemned to handle the axe and spade would have been a very different thing. Those arms, which scarcely seem made for use, had they been destined to gather in their grasp the sheaves of autumn instead of sustaining some delicate piece of embroidery, would certainly have shown a very different development and proportion. The sylph-like form would soon disappear among the labors of the field. Who can tell then, how far the alleged inferiority of intellectual power would

disappear were both sexes subjected to the same training, if the power of observation were as early called forth, if instead of being shut up in the house and her attention confined to a few objects, woman were permitted to roam abroad and have as free a range and as great excitements as are ministered to the other sex, if on her devolved the great concerns of politics, government, and business? When driven by necessity to these occupations she generally discovers a great degree of sagacity, and a power of improvement truly astonishing.

But whatever may be the original equality of the sexes in intellect and capacity, it is evident that it was intended by God that they should move in different spheres, and of course that their powers should be developed in different directions. They are created not to be alike but to be different. The Bible with a noble simplicity expresses in few words all that can be said upon this subject. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them." As much as if the lawgiver of the Jews had said; "Perfect humanity is made up of both the sexes. One is not complete without the other." They are therefore counterparts of each other. They must

be different, and in many respects the opposites of each other, to fill their different spheres. This difference runs through the whole of their physical, moral, and intellectual constitution. This radical and universal difference points out distinctly a different sphere of action and duty. The God who made them knew the sphere in which each of them was designed to act, and he fitted them for it by their physical frames, by their intellectual susceptibilities, by their tastes and affections. The sphere of neither comprehends the whole scene of this life, but they are like the halves of a circle, imperfect when alone, but when united forming a beautiful whole, and covering the whole surface of human life. The common lot of labor and care is ordained for them both. The share of each is plainly pointed out in their respective constitutions. To the more robust constitution of man are appointed the labors and dangers of the chase, the toils of the field, the perils of the ocean. There is to correspond to that robuster form, a corresponding energy, enterprise, and courage. To woman the care of home, the preparation of food, the making of clothing, the nursing and education of children. To her is given in larger measure sensibility, tenderness, patience. And

the instinctive taste and discrimination of each sex is the best criterion of what the other ought to be. What are those qualities which irresistibly captivate the heart of woman? Those precisely in which she is excelled by man. She feels herself weak and timid. She needs a protector. Strength and courage are therefore indispensable requisites in the other sex. She is in a measure dependent. She asks for wisdom, constancy, firmness, perseverance, and she is willing to repay it all by the surrender of the full treasure of her affections. Woman despises in man every thing like herself except a tender heart. It is enough that she is effeminate and weak; she does not want another like herself. Just so with man. Any approach to his own peculiar characteristics in the opposite sex is odious and disgusting. He is subdued not by strength but by tenderness, not by boldness but by reserve. These instincts are the unerring guide of what both man and woman ought to be. In each others' hearts therefore are inscribed, as in a tablet, the laws which should govern their respective conduct; they are the mirror in which they should behold the perfection to which they are to aspire. They are thus formed by opposition and correspondence of tastes to

take a higher delight in each other's society than they can do in that of their own sex. They are thus made indispensable to each other's happiness in every way. Were all women, they would be miserable indeed; and were all men, they would be no less so. Not only does their mutual society minister to their happiness, but likewise to their moral improvement, for they are born with a mutual desire to please each other.

This is a fact, which I have never seen noticed by any writer on the moral constitution of man, the instinctive reverence which the two sexes have for each other above and beyond that which they cherish for their own. It is a sort of human religion. The human soul, made after the similitude of God, has ever a sort of Divinity about it. The presence of one of our own sex is a quickener of the conscience, is a moral restraint, and is so far a perpetual discipline to the conduct. But with this reverence there is toward the other sex an instinctive desire to please. Here then is a two-fold power. No man ever felt in the presence of a man the same awe and restraint that he feels in the presence of a woman; and no woman is ever so much put on her good behaviour before one of her own sex as she is in the presence of a man. Here

then is an immense moral influence which the sexes are perpetually exerting upon each other, and in the aggregate its effects must be beyond all estimate. Nothing can be wiser then, than that arrangement of society, which God has established, where the sexes associate freely together. Hence also the deterioration and corruption of every form of society which separates either into a community by themselves.

And here let me say a word to those parents who, from a dread of the evils of society, imagine that their daughters will be more safe from being kept in entire seclusion, that their sentiments will be more correct, and their judgments more unperverted. Nothing can be more mistaken. No part of education is more important to the youth of the more secluded sex than the society of the other of her own age. It is by this association alone that she acquires that insight into character, which is almost her only defence. For this perception of character she has a greater aptitude than the other sex. It seems to be provided to compensate her for her want of opportunity to mingle largely with the world. She is wronged instead of benefited then, by being shut up from society at that period of



life when her peculiar talent may be most advantageously cultivated. Who is the best merchant? He who has the best knowledge of the particular merchandize in which he deals. There is no way to become a merchant except by perpetual examination and comparison of the things to be bought and sold. Theoretical knowledge may do some good, reading may serve to prepare the mind to observe, but there is no substitute for experience. Just so, if man or woman would know the world, I mean in the sense of becoming truly wise, not cunning, and calculating, and selfish, there is no other way but to mingle with the world. And no being is more utterly helpless than a woman thrown into the world without any knowledge of it. Without this she is in perpetual danger of becoming the victim of her susceptible imagination, and her generous impulses. There is quite as much danger therefore in secluding young women from society, as in permitting them to become absorbed in it, and lost to every thing else.

Besides the knowledge which is acquired by the early association of the sexes, the mutual reverence and desire to please, which is

implanted in the bosom of each, becomes the school of discipline for the moral sentiments of both. The strong desire to appear in the eyes of the other sex all that their common moral sentiments demand in order to be an object of esteem, renders it impossible that they should not desire to be in reality all that they would wish to appear. They are likely to come to the conclusion that hypocrisy costs more than actual goodness, and so are constrained to strive after that perfection which alone can come up to the ideal they see mirrored in the moral nature of those they most wish to please.

There is moreover a sentiment of the sexes towards each other, independent of the marriage tie, common to those who enter into it and those who never do, which perhaps cannot be defined or described in words, but which constitutes the greatest charm of this life. It imparts a roseate flush to the otherwise pale and sickly hue of this world. It gives a zest to what would otherwise be tasteless. The value we set upon things cannot be weighed in balances, nor told by measure, nor reckoned in money. The sentiments of the human heart know nothing of price. They are infinite and immeasurable. They spurn all calculation, for they are bound-

less and unfathomable. And do what you will, the sentiments are man's supreme law. To man the world and all there is in it is valuable, is beautiful, is worth living for, only because it is enriched by the presence of woman; and to woman this world would be utterly tasteless did she not share the dignity, the enterprise, the intrinsic nobleness that she conceives to reside in man.

Sentiment is omnipotent in the human heart. What is the spring and motive of all enterprise in the heart of man? What sends his ships into every sea, his commerce into all lands? What clears the forest, and raises the comfortable home, or builds the lofty palace? Enter into the secret chambers of his imagery and you will find the Divinity, upon whose altars all this is to be offered up, is woman. Unshared by her all would be vain and profitless. And why do we see woman from the first so careful of her person, so studious of ornament, so diligent to make up by untiring industry her want of strength to help forward the more difficult labors in which man engages? Search the recesses of her consciousness, and you would find the ever present idea, that she was made to be the help-mate, the delight, and the comforter of man.

These sentiments are divine, sacred, unchangeable. Nothing, even the most false and vicious state of society, can altogether pervert them.

The mission of woman is foreshown almost in the cradle; and it is a mission of humanity, gentleness, tenderness, generosity, love. Mark a family just after the birth of a daughter. An infant comes always with a blessed message from God to the human heart. It is a reiteration of the old but ever new commandment, "love one another." It is a summons to duty, to disinterestedness, to kindness, to self denial; and it secures obedience by an appeal more powerful than any that can be made to the cold region of the understanding. It opens the heart,—the fountain and well spring of duty. Most especially is this the case, if the new born heir of human destiny add to its own helplessness the claim of belonging to that sex, which through life demands the protection of the other. Even the little epithets of endearment, which are the natural expressions of the gushings of parental affection, have a shade of tenderness towards a daughter which is not bestowed upon an infant of the rougher sex. This arises not so much from any material difference in their present condition as from the anticipations of the future.

The boy, though now weak and wailing, will soon develope the strength, the resources, the courage of a man, and be able to buffet his way through this rude world. But the daughter, how little control is she to have over her destiny! How entirely is her happiness to be placed in the power of others, of those with whom Providence shall cast her lot! Added to this is the feeling that in the heart of the daughter they have a richer treasure than they can possess any where else. All things they feel are uncertain, but the love of a daughter cannot fail. Times and circumstances may change. They may wax old, or be unfortunate, and the world will pay its court to the young and the successful, but in the heart of a daughter they can never be forgotten.

That softening of the heart, which takes place toward the child, is not lost upon their relations to the world. Children, particularly daughters, are a new tie connecting the parents to their species, as well as hostages for their own good behaviour. They feel that their stake in the well being of society is increased rather than diminished as they decline in life, for they are more interested for those for whose welfare they must at length cease to provide, than they ever were for themselves. They feel more solicitous to

conciliate the good will of the world, and to leave behind them the odour of a good name for the benefit of their offspring, than from any advantage which they themselves can ever derive from them.

The tenderness which is lavished on the daughter ceases not with infancy, nor is it often lost. There is among the higher classes a desire to give her the best opportunities of education, and among the lower to save her from the coarser labors and drudgery of life. On a daughter parental care is not often thrown away. Her affections, shut up from the world, are the more concentrated upon their natural objects at home. The mother soon finds the being, whom she first knew only as a plaything, as something to nurse and to love, grown up to be a companion, a counsellor, an aid in her cares and toils. The father finds not only affection, but society at home. The father and the daughter are a picture, which has been often drawn by art, and described in poetry, but it has never been bodied forth in all the richness with which it paints itself upon the imagination. Their society, their interchange of duty and affection, is not only most beautiful to behold, but it is happy and sanctifying to them both. I doubt not the

moral influence which it exerts is above all estimate. How is it possible that the father can wander from the paths of goodness, who has daughters whose presence must be to him a stinging reproach? And how there can be a froward, bad, disobedient, ungrateful daughter, is a mystery which I for one could never fathom.

The daughter has much in her power. She has youth, vivacity, generally the grace of form, always the charm inseparable from youth, often the irresistible attraction of beauty, and she may have the still more enduring endowment of amiable temper and mental accomplishment. And she may move in the sacred sphere of home as a ministering spirit of peace, and love, and joy.

But it may likewise be otherwise. Because the path of duty to her is comparatively easy, is dictated to her by her affections, is demonstrated to her by every day's experience, it does not follow that she will walk in it. She may prove false to her obligations. And what a desolation does she make in the domestic circle! How can she wring the hearts of those whom she is bound by every obligation to love and cherish? Instead of acquiescing with cheerfulness in whatever her lot may be, she may annoy her

parents by perpetual reflections and complaints. Instead of taking her share of the cares and toils which are inseparable from a family, she may refuse them all, and choose to spend her time in idleness, or in dress, or company, and consider herself born for a higher lot than that of ordinary mortals. By the indulgence of a bad temper, instead of being the delight and pride of the domestic circle, she may keep her home in a perpetual broil. Alas! for that house that is under the tyranny of a termagant. There is no dagger so sharp as the tongue of an insolent, disobedient, ungrateful daughter. If any eyes could weep tears of blood, it would be the eyes of parents who have brought up a daughter to be their terror, their torment, and their scourge.

I have drawn this picture with unfeigned reluctance, which I question not is as revolting to all who hear me as it is to me. But I have done it because it was necessary to the task I have undertaken, to describe the sphere and the duties of woman, and in doing so I must state what is, as well as what ought to be, I must testify to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

If the relation of daughter be surrounded with so many interesting associations, scarcely less so



is that of sister, considered either with respect to her own, or the other sex. A thousand ties concur to bind sisters together. There is, in the first place, a natural affection in the human heart, implanted there to correspond to that relation, and thus unite those in attachment who have been borne on the same bosom, and grown up around the same hearth. Besides this instinctive affection, they naturally become attached from sympathy, from sharing the same joys and sorrows, and loving the same objects. The same events for years have filled them with gladness, and often they have mingled their tears at the same calamities. Their interests have been the same, and even their childish plays, the source to them of infinite delight, have made closer the tie which draws their hearts together. Sisters, blossoms on the same stem, what should ever sever them! Stars shining in the same constellation, why should they not mingle their mild radiance in peace! If there be in their hearts any capacity for attachment, how can their common tasks, their common pleasures, their perpetual society, fail of uniting them in the most intimate affection? If they have any literary ambition, any desire for intellectual improvement, they may minister endlessly to

each other's pleasures and progress. If they would add to literary accomplishment the charm of graceful and winning manners, whose eye so quick as that of a sister to administer friendly criticism and admonition? I counsel them to use well that portion of life, which they pass under the same roof, to cement the bond of natural affection, for the time will come when they will probably need it all. For as fountains, which rise upon the same mountain top, diverge and run in opposite directions, traverse plains as different as tropical abundance and polar sterility, and finally join the great ocean, one under the burning line, and the other in the midst of perpetual snows, so sisters rocked in the same cradle, watched over by the same maternal solicitude, walking hand in hand the same paths of education and accomplishment, may be destined by events over which they have no control to a lot as widely contrasted as can possibly be conceived. Equality of conditions they cannot hope. How shall they resist the influences, which tend to divide their hearts as well as their fortunes? The best security for lasting attachment and for happy intercourse through life, is the assiduous cultivation, so long as they are together, of kindness, forbearance,

generosity. . It is a mistake to suppose that the natural affections need no cultivation. They are, from the nature of things, subjected to the same laws with any other attachment. The natural relations are only the foundation for attachments. But unfaithfulness to the social relations gradually weakens the strongest natural ties, and sisters even, who have done nothing but cross and render each other uncomfortable, will seek their friendships any where rather than with those in whom they find neither sympathy nor consideration.

But it is in the relation of brother and sister that the moral influence of woman is more conspicuous than in that between sisters. There her mission is early displayed in restraining the bad passions, in softening the manners, and developing the affections of mankind. The first harmonizing influence to which man is subjected, is the intercourse with his sisters almost from the cradle. His natural desire of society compels him to seek their company, and mingle his sports with theirs. But the doll and the baby-house will not stand the same rude treatment with his tops and hobby-horses, and unless he can make some treaty with them he cannot get them out to see him make his dam,

and sail his ship in the gutter. The first condition and law of his intercourse with them then, is the law of gentleness and self-restraint. This moral influence extends not only to manners, but to sentiments. The boy, by associating exclusively with his own sex, becomes not only rude in manners, but coarse in his sentiments, and gross in his tastes. Thus the first defence is thrown down, which God has built up around his principles and his morals. He is more open to the approach of vicious associates, he may be farther initiated into their ways before he is aware of their dangerous influence. The nicer moral perceptions of the female mind are usually the first to descry the signs of approaching peril, and a different relation gives the sister the power of a more frank and emphatic admonition than the parents enjoy. There is scarcely a more interesting sight on earth, than a brother and sister in the bloom of life, united by true affection, and true to all those duties and attentions which they mutually owe each other. And candor compels me to confess that failure is most seldom on the sister's part. There is a generosity and self sacrifice of sisters to advance the interests of a brother, which I fear is not often reciprocated. I could fill more than

one lecture with instances which have come to my personal knowledge, in which sisters have nobly contributed their all to raise a brother to the advantages of a liberal education, and thus to elevate him to eminence, to station, and to wealth.

But the parental home is intended to be the school of woman's education, not her permanent abode. As the instinct, which teaches the birds of passage the time of their emigration, suddenly impels them to mount to untried regions of the atmosphere, and seek through cloud and tempest a land they have never seen, so a like inspiration teaches woman that there is another home for her, destined by the Great Designer, of still greater happiness than that which she has already known, and under the same apparent destiny. One appears to lead her to that happy place. Marriage comes as the great crisis of woman's existence. And where, if you search earth through, will you find an object which the eye bends on with such intense, I had almost said, painful interest, as a bride? What an era when considered with reference either to the past or the future! It is in a manner the crush of one world, and the beginning of a new one. She is to go from a home that she has

known and loved, where she has been loved and cherished, to one to which she is an utter stranger. Her happiness is to be subjected to those on whose characters, tempers, principles, she can make no calculation. And what is to assure her of the faith of him, who has sworn at the altar to cherish and protect her? She may, in the blindness of affection, have given her heart to one who will wring and break it, and she may be going to martyrdom, where pride and prudence will alike deny her the poor solace of complaint. Yet she is willing to venture all. The law instituted by the Creator is upon her, and urges her forward. With calm confidence she puts herself under the protection of that Almighty Principle, which issuing from the throne of God penetrates and pervades all things, and then returns to link itself to the throne of his Omnipotence, the Principle of Love, and she is safe. Perhaps if she knew what life has in store for her, she would for a moment shrink back. The marriage festivity would not be without its fears. And for myself, so many whom I have united for life have I seen soon overtaken by calamity, hoping parents bending in speechless agony over the loved and the lost, or watching with breathless apprehension the

fearful changes of extreme disease, that to me there is ever an undertone of sadness in the wedding's mirth; and when that bright being approaches, upon whom every eye centres, and for whom every heart palpitates, I can almost fancy her bridal attire transformed to mourning, and her blushes changed to tears. But a second thought convinces me that such anticipations are treason to God and man. Marriage is the ordinance of God, and let not man gainsay it. It is indeed the commencement of struggles and toils. But for what else is man made, or woman either? Those toils and struggles shall be lighter when mutual affection animates the effort. Troubles will come, but they come to all; and who shall better sustain them than those to whom mutual affection gives mutual support?

We now see woman in that sphere for which she was originally intended, and which she is so exactly fitted to adorn and bless, as the wife, the mistress of a home, the solace, the aid, and the counsellor of that ONE, for whose sake alone the world is of any consequence to her. If life be increased in cares, so is it also enriched by new satisfactions. She herself, if she be inspired by just sentiments and true affection, perceives that she has attained her true position.

Delivered from that tastelessness, which sooner or later creeps over a single life, every power and faculty is called into energetic exercise, and she feels the current of existence to flow in a richer, deeper stream. We are all made for action and enterprise. Existence, though surfeited with luxury and abundance, is insipid without it. The affections, which God has ordained to spring in the bosoms of those whom he has destined to pass through life together, are no deceivers. They are not intended to betray the sexes into a state of misery. The wife does not bid adieu to happiness, though she leaves a magnificent mansion to take up her abode under an humbler roof. Youth, health, employment, affection, hope, are more than a compensation for all. The privations of commencing life in narrow circumstances are borne with cheerfulness and alacrity. If there be on both sides good sense and generous feeling, as well as true affection, nothing will seem hard, and they will experience a happiness unknown to those who shut up or disappoint their affections from false pride, or from dread of losing caste, by beginning life precisely as their fathers and mothers did before them.



The good wife! How much of this world's happiness and prosperity is contained in the compass of these two short words! Her influence is immense. The power of a wife, for good or for evil, is altogether irresistible. Home must be the seat of happiness, or it must be for ever unknown. A good wife is to a man wisdom, and courage, and strength, and hope, and endurance. A bad one is confusion, weakness, discomfiture, despair. No condition is hopeless when the wife possesses firmness, decision, energy, economy. There is no outward prosperity which can counteract indolence, folly, and extravagance at home. No spirit can long resist bad domestic influences. Man is strong, but his heart is not adamant. He delights in enterprise and action, but to sustain him he needs a tranquil mind, and a whole heart. He expends his whole moral force in the conflicts of the world. His feelings are daily lacerated to the utmost point of endurance by perpetual collision, irritation, and disappointment. To recover his equanimity and composure, home must be to him a place of repose, of peace, of cheerfulness, of comfort; and his soul renews its strength and again goes forth with fresh vigor to encounter the

labors and troubles of the world. But if at home he find no rest, and there is met by a bad temper, sullenness, or gloom; or is assailed by discontent, complaint and reproaches, the heart breaks, the spirits are crushed, hope vanishes, and the man sinks into total despair.

Let woman know then, that she ministers at the very fountain of life and happiness. It is her hand that lades out with overflowing cup its soul refreshing waters, or casts in the branch of bitterness which makes them poison and death. Her ardent spirit breathes the breath of life into all enterprise. Her patience and constancy are mainly instrumental in carrying forward to completion the best human designs. Her more delicate moral sensibility is the unseen power which is ever at work to purify and refine society. And the nearest glimpse of heaven that mortals ever get on earth is that domestic circle, which her hands have trained to intelligence, virtue, and love, which her gentle influence pervades, and of which her radiant presence is the centre and the sun.

It may be thought by some prosaic persons, that thus far in describing the sphere and duties of woman I have drawn too much from the

regions of sentiment and imagination. I can only say in my defence, that nothing is prosaic, which concerns human hearts and human happiness. Woman is made to live in the regions of the sentiments and imagination. Her sorrows and her joys are there. It is they which to her clothe the dull affairs of this every day life with an interest unknown to the rougher sex. And she herself is the very poetry of the world.



## LECTURE III.

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### ON THE SPHERE AND DUTIES OF WOMAN.



IN MY last lecture I gave a general outline of the distinguishing characteristics, the sphere and influence of woman. It will be the object of the present lecture to point out her privileges and her trials. I shall examine the charges which are current in the world against the sex, and show the cause and manner of her failure, whenever she does fail, to accomplish that high destiny to which she was appointed.

And I commence by saying, that every American woman ought to thank God every day of her existence, that she was born in this country, and at the present period. The happiness of her being depends more on outward

circumstances than that of the other sex. Man's greater power of action and endurance makes him more at home in all conditions and all periods of the world. Man in a state of barbarism can be as rough and as barbarous as his associates. In the absence of law and moral restraints he can defend himself. In the absence of physical comfort he can appropriate to himself the best that is to be had. But without law, without moral and religious restraint, without physical comfort, the condition of woman is wretched indeed. Her more delicate frame, and the care of infancy and childhood, which every where falls to her lot, expose her to greater suffering from the want of physical comforts; the ruder the cabin, the more scantily it is supplied with the necessary furniture for cooking, warming, and repose, the more pitiable is her condition. And where there is no law but individual will, whatever wrong is inflicted, she is generally the sufferer. Her lot varies then, in different ages, precisely with the progress of civilization. In the United States civilization, including in that term physical comfort and abundance with the subjection of society to the restraints of morality and religion, has reached a greater perfection than has any

where else been known. Woman, for the reasons I have already stated, is more interested than man in the progress of the arts. The labors of the field remain much the same from age to age, but the two processes of grinding meal by machinery, and spinning and weaving by the power of steam and water, have liberated millions of female hands from the dullest drudgery, and from the slavery of perpetual toil. And that conquest of law and justice, which marks the last stage in the progress of human rights, which gives man but one wife and thus makes her his equal, and his companion, does more for her elevation than any political change which any civil revolution has ever accomplished for man. To make the American woman happy in her lot, no matter what that lot may be, she has only to read the history of past ages, and make herself acquainted with the present condition of the world. Let her cast her eyes upon the map of the globe and survey Asia, the cradle of the human race. History will tell her that that vast continent was filled with inhabitants and poured out her armed millions upon the West before the forests of Europe had been penetrated by the foot of civilization. While

the countries which now constitute Spain, France, England, Germany, and Russia, were an unbroken wilderness; and America was utterly unknown, the banks of the Euphrates, the Indus, and the Ganges were thronged with a crowded population, and China herself numbered nearly as many inhabitants as the rest of Asia. From that day to this there has been no falling off in numbers, and we may safely say, that in Asia have lived two-thirds of the human race; and not one of all the millions of the female sex who have existed there, has enjoyed what are now considered the natural and unalienable rights of woman. Europe was little better till the introduction of Christianity. Tacitus, it is true, speaks of the higher estimation in which the ancient Germans held their women, and there was undoubtedly a greater respect paid her by the rude barbarians of the North than had ever been exhibited in Asia or Southern Europe. What woman is at the present day as the friend and equal of man, she owes entirely to Christianity and the doctrine of immortality which accompanies it. It is only the respect for her, generated by the belief of her possessing an immortal and responsible soul like

man, that can vindicate for her that social equality with man which physically she does not possess. The elevation of woman is a struggle between power and right. The right will prevail just as fast, and just as far, as the moral and religious sentiments are made to predominate in man over the sensual and the selfish. No form of Paganism has ever yet had the power so far to cultivate the moral and religious sentiments, as to compel man to emancipate woman from that bondage in which his superior strength enables him to hold her.

The working of the new principle of respect for the female sex, though early introduced into the Christian church, first became visible in the sentiments of society in the middle ages. It was the new sentiment of respect for woman, introduced by Christianity, which gave rise to chivalry, that splendid enthusiasm of the human heart, which passing from one extreme to the other, elevated woman from a slave to a deity. It may seem unaccountable to the student of history, how so great a change could have been effected in the sentiments of mankind. A few ages before, we see woman secluded, oppressed, her will and inclinations first subjected to the



control of her parents, and afterwards to that of her husband, her lot chosen for her without the least regard to her happiness. On a sudden we see her raised to an idol. The splendid pageant of the tournament passes before us. All there then was of wealth, of nobility, of valor, is assembled; chariots are glittering, horses are prancing, young and hot blood is mounted, armed to the teeth for mortal combat. And all for what? For whom is all this pomp, this military array, this fierce and bloody encounter? Direct your eye to yonder pavilion, decked with more than oriental magnificence,

“Where the gorgeous East with richest hand,  
Showers on her kings barbaric, pearl and gold.”

There sits woman enthroned as queen, and all this magnificence is but an expression of the new born reverence which had sprung up for her in the human heart. The suitor for her hand and heart, no longer approaches her sordid parents with money, to buy her as a slave, but he must win her affections by a surrender of his own. The parties thus commencing their connexion on avowed terms of equality, there was a better chance for kind and respectful treatment on the part of the stronger sex.

To this elevation of woman the theology of the time undoubtedly contributed. Woman had been nearly connected with the story of man's redemption.

"The holy virgin bending o'er her blessed babe,"

had been made the subject of art, by the vivid feelings and fervid imaginations of the southern Europeans. And nothing perhaps, could be more striking to a barbarian fancy. How could it be, that woman should not be exalted in the eyes of those who were taught, that Mary had been the mother of God. The Madonna and her child, in painting and sculpture, was the favorite decoration of the temples of the Most High. It was impossible for those barbarians, already imbued with a reverence for the female sex unknown among other nations, thus to see woman associated with the forms and rites of religion, without insensibly elevating their own conceptions of her dignity and her rights. Accordingly we see in those ages the strangest admixture of devotion and love. Indeed the true knight seemed often to blend the image of the mistress of his human affections with her whom he conceived to demand a higher homage.

From that day to this the condition of woman has been constantly improving in the whole occidental world. The laws of marriage and inheritance have more and more been conformed to the doctrines and spirit of the New Testament; and under their influence woman has been gradually rising to that condition for which she was originally designed, and in which she was placed when it was said, that God created man, male and female. In the United States these principles are more fully carried out. The waters of the Atlantic seem to have washed out the last traces of that oriental prejudice which cleaved so long to the race, and which condemns woman to a social inferiority to man.

Another circumstance which has contributed to raise the female sex to a superior social condition to any that she has ever known before, is the sparseness of our population, when compared with the productiveness of the soil, and the perfection of the mechanic arts. There cannot be much respect for woman where she is forced out of her sphere, and compelled to participate with man in the labors of the field; or when she is so tasked as to preclude all possibility of cultivating her

intellectual powers, and of acquiring those accomplishments which are appropriate to her sex. The labor once done by female hands, but now performed by machinery in this country, is perhaps as great in amount as could be done by all the females in it. The result is, that while in Spain, and France, and Italy, and sometimes in England, the women are seen to labor in the same fields and upon the same public works with men, and in consequence become coarse in their persons, and still coarser in their sentiments and manners, nothing of the kind is seen here.

How can any American woman forbear to thank the kind Disposer of her lot every time she sees a colony of the peasantry of the old world pass through our streets, the women bearing in their persons, defrauded of every grace and every charm, the marks of the oppression and servitude of untold generations! Where among the women of our own happy country can there be found any counterpart to this?

Such is the abundance of physical comfort that reigns among us, extending even to those who get their bread by day labor, that one generation is sufficient to obliterate the marks

of the degradation to which they have been accustomed. Their better social condition enables the children of the poorest to acquire a delicacy and refinement, which in the same class is unknown in other countries.

As woman is nowhere so worthy of respect as in this country, so is she nowhere treated with so much. A late female traveller from England, who certainly ought to be a competent judge, remarks: "The degree of consideration shown to woman is, in my opinion, greater than is rational, or good for either party." Their better physical condition, without doubt, enables them to command greater respect, and this respect reacts upon their physical condition, and gives them those privileges and exemptions, by which alone their dignity may be sustained.

Although as yet falling far short of its relative value, female labor is better rewarded here than it is anywhere else. For we have not yet reached, nor shall we reach for centuries to come, the second barbarism, of an overgrown population. When that comes, no matter what may be the sentiment with regard to woman, her degradation and oppression will follow of course. Famine and want extinguish all sen-

timent, all humanity, and the weaker will always be found the suffering party.

I repeat it then, every American woman has reason to thank God every day of her life, that she was born in this happy country. She cannot read of any portion or period of the world, without becoming more and more convinced, that America is the Paradise of women.

The enlightened traveller, of whom I just spoke, expresses the opinion that the consideration with which women are treated in this country is carried to excess, that she suffers for it in the end, by the feebleness, effeminacy, helplessness and bad health which it induces. For my own part I must confess that I fully agree with her in this opinion. However important may be the sphere which woman was created to fill, however much she may do to adorn and embellish life, and promote social happiness, it is evident that ill health puts it entirely out of her power, either to enjoy herself, or minister to the happiness of others.

It must therefore, I think, be set down among the faults of the women of this country, that they do not take sufficient care of their health. There is evidently a great falling off in this particular within one generation. The

women that are now going off the stage, are certainly a very different race of beings from those who are coming on. When I see the fragile and diminutive forms of the women of our times, and compare them with the women whom I recollect as the partners of the men of the revolution, it seems to me that if the men of that age had had such mothers, we never should have had any revolution at all.

However sublimated may be our ideas of woman, she still belongs to this earth, she is still subjected to the laws of organized and animated nature. Those laws go on to their fulfilment regardless of sentiment, of fashion and the usages of society. Health is the result of obedience to those laws, and they cannot be infringed in the least degree, without a corresponding injury. Health is the result of simple food, abstinence from stimulants, seasonable hours of repose, regular employment, much exercise in the open air, proper clothing and a tranquil mind. Any transgression of any one of these laws is sure to be followed by suffering, by impaired health, an enfeebled constitution, disordered nerves, wretchedness and dejection. Now let us see if one single law of all these I have enumerated, is observed in this country,

especially among the higher classes. The progress of luxury among us, the freedom of communication among all nations, has loaded the tables of the more affluent classes with the delicacies of all lands. It is as much as the most considerate and abstinent can do to restrain themselves amid so many thousand temptations, within the bounds of healthful moderation. But what shall I say of the sumptuous entertainments which fashion has made necessary to those who mingle in general society? After having been compelled by ill health to make myself scientifically acquainted with this subject, when I see the feasts to which I am invited by the generous hospitality of my nearest and dearest friends, I confess I am appalled. When I see the variety and the richness of one course after another as it comes on, I am filled with astonishment, I marvel, not why there are so many invalids amongst us, but how we live at all.

This mode of living will possibly do for men who exercise much in the open air, and whose constitutions are more robust. It might do for women who are active housekeepers, or who consider it a sacred duty to take a long walk every day. But to those who do neither, but



sit in warm apartments, and busy themselves in reading or needle work, it is absolute destruction. When we add to this, late hours, crowded saloons, thin dressing, and hardly an apology for shoes, how should it be otherwise, than that our women, the most beautiful the sun has ever shone upon, should be the earliest to fade? At that period of life when the European woman is in the meridian of matronly beauty, full of energy, life, and cheerfulness, the American woman has shrunk into the withered proportions of advanced life. I consider this to be one of the most melancholy features of our state of society. And are the daughters of this land, who thus trifle with themselves, aware of the full import of the term, bad health? Those who have never experienced it, have no idea of the length and the breadth, the height and the depth of its sad significance. It means in the first place, the loss of all personal charms. It means a faded complexion, early wrinkles, and gray hairs. It means the decay of all the susceptibilities of enjoyment. It means a deadness to all that is cheerful and pleasant in life. It means a distressing sense of burden and oppression under the most common and easy

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duties, which are otherwise the source of satisfaction and alacrity. It means a sick room, with all its horrible and loathsome paraphernalia of medicines, and drugs, and potions, at the very thought of which the soul sickens and revolts. If there be one woman within the sound of my voice, who possesses firm health and a sound constitution, I entreat her, if she have any regard for her own happiness, if she do not wish to strip this life of every charm, to make it her religious duty to preserve so invaluable a blessing.

She will do this the rather, as I shall go on to show, that her happiness depends upon it in more ways than she may at first be aware. It is impossible for ill health and a serene temper to go together. Ill health is almost always attended by weakness and irritability of the nervous system. Things that we can bear calmly when we are in health, become the causes of insupportable vexation when we are sick. Disagreeable thoughts then become almost as painful as cuts and bruises when we are in health. The female constitution is at all times much more liable to impressions than that of the other sex. In ill health this is greatly aggravated; and she must be a saint indeed,

who, in perpetual ill health, and the derangement of domestic affairs, which is almost sure to ensue, can always keep her temper serene.

A serene temper is perhaps the first requisite to domestic happiness. Any failure here strikes at the root of all enjoyment. Our sources of happiness are more spiritual than is generally conceived. The world at large is apt to judge by externals; when they see wealth and splendor they imagine there must be happiness of course. But nothing can be more mistaken. Happiness resides in the mind, and the upholsterer can do very little to procure it. It consists in a consciousness of harmony, of esteem, and attachment, more than in any thing else. Wherever there is entire confidence, and a consciousness of true attachment, there is the very material of satisfaction. Existence under those circumstances is happiness. We breathe it like the very atmosphere which surrounds us. Any interruption of this feeling is not so much a remote cause of unhappiness, as it is itself wretchedness and misery. There is no other way to live happily then, but to gain entire mastery over the temper. And this difficulty is vastly increased by the irritability of ill health.

There is an obscure tradition, which has been handed down from a remote antiquity, that the female sex are prone to abuse the noble gift of speech; in short, that they are apt to make a rash and unadvised use of the tongue. They are accused, of having an unwarrantable curiosity about the affairs of other people, and then an irrepressible desire of communicating to others that of which they had better have been ignorant themselves. The grave charge has been brought against them by their own sex, of a propensity to scandal and mischief making. It is said, that the sins of the tongue are the besetting sins of woman. This charge I shall attempt neither to palliate nor deny. I could not be faithful to the duty I have undertaken, to delineate the sphere and duties of woman, if I lightly passed over it. It is unfortunately the case, that the power we all possess of doing mischief infinitely transcends our power of doing good. It may take ages and generations to build up a great city, but one incendiary may burn it down in a night. It costs time and money to build the noble ship, yet when she is launched and filled with the precious things of the earth, one false sweep of her rudder may plunge her in the

bosom of the ocean. So it requires years to build up between two souls the still nobler edifice of a sacred friendship. Yet it is in the power of the weakest person living, who possesses speech, to destroy it in a moment. The report, and perhaps misrepresentation of a hasty speech, the ebullition of a transitory emotion, may plant a thorn in the breast that can never be extracted.

We are all imperfect, and do many things that are censurable every day; and our best actions are capable of being so misrepresented as to appear to be not only without merit, but actually odious.

Some women appear to be incapable of keeping a secret. It seems to burn upon their lips till they have uttered it. Let a woman of this description come in possession of a secret, affecting the peace of whole families, and which every tie of humanity would persuade her to bury in utter oblivion, and what does she do? Stay at home and forget it by pursuing her accustomed avocations? Ah! no, wet or dry, cold or hot, out she must go at the earliest hour that it is decent to visit. She calls on her most intimate friend, without perhaps any definite intention of un-

burdening her mind. But when she arrives, she can think of nothing else. One topic after another is started, but all immediately flag. A strange air of mystery and constraint comes over her, which brings the conversation entirely to a stand. "What is the matter? Has any thing happened? Do tell me what has happened." It is all over. Out it must come, if it costs her her life. But then she quiets her conscience by exacting a promise of inviolable secrecy. That promise of secrecy however, means that she will tell it only to those of her immediate acquaintance, whom she can trust; so in about two days it is all over town. It is a profound secret until it is found that every body knows it. Thus it is in the power of some two or three women, who are so disposed, to keep any community in a perpetual strife. I have myself known a whole town to be thrown into the most violent excitement, and a division created, which separated families, alienated friends, and entirely broke up all social harmony for years, by one base insinuation of not more than ten words.

It might seem at first sight, that such conduct as this could proceed from nothing but pure malice. But whoever should draw

this inference would commit great injustice. In nine cases out of ten it has no worse or deeper motive than love of excitement, fondness for telling news. It proceeds from inconsideration, and the want of something more important to engage their attention. The thoughts of man are busied in other matters. He has not time for gossip even if he had the inclination. Between regrets and self gratulation on the past, struggle for the present, and plans for the future, he has little time to look into his neighbors' affairs. But women, who are shut out from the exhaustless topics of business and politics, are under a stronger temptation to busy themselves in what is going on immediately around them. It is not malice. For let that very neighbor, whose character in a thoughtless hour they have picked in pieces, be overtaken by sickness and distress, and their hearts are the first to bleed, their hands the first to bring relief.

Women are accused of being strong in their prejudices, personal in their feelings, quick to take offence, and implacable in their resentments. Women are said never to quarrel with any discretion. When once roused they do and say things that never can be forgiven

nor forgotten. This certainly, if it be true, is an unfortunate trait of character. It is unfortunate for the world, but still more so for themselves. Imperfect as we all are, occasions of offence are often occurring, and it is very certain that if every real offence, much more every imaginary one, were resented and pursued to the utmost, there could be no peace in society. Nothing in the world is more easy than to quarrel, if people are so disposed. The most trivial things may be tortured either into neglect, or freedom or insult. So that it may generally be said, that most quarrels are not so much the consequence of any particular offence, as the manifestation of a state of mind previously existing. The wolf is always sure to discover that the lamb he has determined to devour, has been troubling the water, though he spies it below him in the stream.

This quickness and depth of feeling has a natural cause in the greater susceptibility of the female constitution to impressions of all kinds, and in the feeling of helplessness and dependence. None feel so deeply as those who cannot resist. Woman then, when she considers herself injured, has it not in her power to feel or to display the same magnan-



imity that she might if she were conscious of the ability to vindicate her rights. A sense of wrong sinks deep into her soul, it rankles there, and her lively imagination clothes the perpetrator with all painful and hateful associations, which reason and religious principle cannot always dispel. Of this fact all women ought to be fully aware, and as they value their own happiness and that of society, they ought to study to moderate their feelings, and take those general and philosophical views of things, which forbid us to lay any thing too much to heart in this short and uncertain life. In judging them too, it must be remembered that this fault grows upon the same branch, and arises from the same peculiarity of temperament whence spring her brightest virtues, her capacity for strong, devoted, and unalterable attachment, and another characteristic no less essential to her happiness, the power of overlooking in those whom she loves, the most glaring faults and imperfections of character.

It is said that woman is irrationally fond of ornament, and is led by that passion into hurtful extravagance. This censure, however just it may be, must be made with discrimination. The propensity to ornament in woman

is an instinct, it is universal and unvarying. It is coeval with our race. The oldest book we have, often mentions it, and generally without disapprobation. The catacombs of Egypt are filled with the relics of ancient female ornaments. The streets of Thebes on a fine day exhibited doubtless as brilliant a spectacle as is now witnessed in Paris, London or New York. If it be an instinct, and I believe it is, it was made to be indulged, and answers some good purpose. It springs from the same principle which produces order, neatness and cleanliness in the house, which is woman's peculiar province. It is unphilosophical and unwise therefore, to banish ornament. This is not the way in which the Almighty himself has proceeded. He has not constructed this world upon the bare principle of utility. He has added beauty, or rather ornament to his works. Men do but imitate him then; in adding beauty to usefulness, when they consult the taste, the sense of beauty, which the Deity has implanted within them. /

The Deity, with his superior power and wisdom, does not ornament his works as an after thought, but he blends beauty with utility

in the original creation. No one will deny the usefulness of woman herself, and God has not poured beauty more lavishly on any of his works. There is, moreover, provision made for the gratification of this taste for the beautiful and ornamental. The earth furnishes more than a subsistence for those who cultivate it. That surplus population, which may be supported from the soil, find a being and a subsistence in ministering to the taste of the rest. Hence the fine arts, Music, Statuary and Painting. Hence the thousand innocent comforts and luxuries with which life is embellished, and which, when kept within due bounds, promote elevation of sentiment and refinement of manners. Hence Literature, Philosophy, Poetry and Eloquence. These certainly minister boundlessly to the happiness of mankind. Among the beneficial influences of the Christian Sabbath may undoubtedly be reckoned the fact, that it redeems one day in seven from the negligence and soil of labor. The cleanliness and decency of the outward person promote the moral elevation of the soul within. This taste for ornament undoubtedly has its purpose as connected with the moral discipline of mankind. But, as in all other things, the difficulty is to say where it

shall stop. Too much money may be expended in this way. The ornaments of woman are of such a nature that with infinite ease they may be carried to the most ruinous extravagance. The necessities of life have a value which is certain, and bears a near proportion to the cost of production. Not so with luxuries, ornaments especially. Their price is altogether arbitrary, generally two or three times their real cost. When, therefore, the love of finery gets possession of a people, it becomes an enormous evil, politically speaking. It is sufficient to upset the balance of trade, and drain the precious metals from a country.

// If the American woman chooses to purchase with a whole day's labor of her husband what costs the labor of a Parisian milliner or glove maker, or a silk weaver of Lyons only an hour, and the difference between the day's labor of the American farmer and the French operative is to be settled by the payment of coin, is it not evident that the price she pays for the gratification of her taste is ruin to her country? This is the explanation of the accounts we see almost weekly of the shipment of large amounts of specie to Europe. Parisian skill and taste, operating upon this love of finery, have made

the world their tributary. The current of money sets in upon them from all quarters of the globe. But what is to become of a nation like ours which imports twenty three millions' worth of silks in one year? What will become of a nation, one tenth of whose exports goes to pay for jewelry and trinkets? //

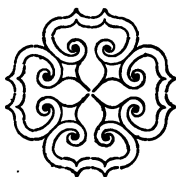
The over indulgence in a taste for finery does not stop at its economical effects. Its social and moral consequences are no less pernicious. It is one great cause and instrument of the follies and sins of what is called fashionable life, which is woman's great snare. It creates distinctions in society, which are as absurd as they are invidious and unjust. It brings about a principle of association, which is fatal to the dignity of human nature, that those shall come together for mutual entertainment, not whose minds are most accomplished, or whose manners are most refined, but who are able to change their dresses the oftene~~st~~ during the winter. This operates upon all but the most opulent as the most grinding oppression. Oh! how many hearts there are in the brilliant saloon, where all should be joyous, sad and depressed by the consciousness that the foolish frippery in which

they are compelled to appear, has cost them more than their own better judgment assures them they ought to expend in the decoration of their persons. This, together with preposterous hours and sumptuous entertainments, operates in each circle as an intolerable oppression to that immediately below them in point of wealth, and so down to those whose means are most limited, and often renders, I fear, that social intercourse which ought to be a blessing and a privilege, little better than a curse. To one whose observation has penetrated behind the scenes, and seen the miserable struggles and subterfuges to which the tyranny of fashion compels people to resort, a splendid party of pleasure suggests any idea rather than that of unmingled enjoyment. It is this oppression moreover, which exasperates to incurable alienation those feelings of jealousy, which are too apt to spring up between the different orders of society, and finally break out in violence and blood. Every woman then, no matter what may be her wealth, who gives into these fashionable follies, much more who commences and fosters them, commits a sin alike against humanity, morality, and religion. She is doing all she can to destroy the

pleasures and advantages of society, and make it a miserable slavery, to shut out of it those who would adorn and improve it the most, and give it up to the empty, the ostentatious, and the weak.

Beware then, I would charge every woman who hears me, beware how you are drawn into the vortex of fashion. You will not only wrong society, but do an irreparable injury to yourself. You will not have travelled far on that road, before you will find a fearful change take place in yourself. You will find the old and home bred virtues of fidelity and sincerity fast taking leave of you. You will find yourself first talking merely to have something to say, then saying what you think will be agreeable, then with no higher temptation, saying what is not true. You will find yourself gradually alienated from the friends of your heart, to be surrounded by the insincere and the sycophantic. When you have cut loose from all natural ties, and smothered every natural affection, you will find yourself utterly dependent on a circle, who you know in your heart would shake you off on the first reverse of fortune. And you will be, moreover, conscious to yourself, that you stand up before

the world the most odious of the things  
which the sun shines upon—a woman with-  
out a heart





## LECTURE IV.

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### ON THE SPHERE AND DUTIES OF WOMAN.



IN THE lecture before the last we instated woman in that sphere which she was created to fill, that of the wife, the mistress of a home, the head of a family. In that position we shall contemplate her in the present lecture. I intend to show that it is one eminently calculated to promote her happiness, to develop and perfect her character. We have a right to infer this antecedently from the nature of the Deity. Being infinitely wise as well as infinitely benevolent, he could not fail to fit woman to her sphere, and her sphere to woman in such a way, that when she follows the leadings of his hand she shall attain to all the happiness that is compatible with this imperfect state.

She is fitted to find happiness in that relation by the affections of her heart. The grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for. We all must have something to love. Especially is this the case with woman, whose capacity for affection is much greater than that of man.

There is a famous passage in the writings of Rousseau, that great delineator of the human heart, which is as true to human nature as it is beautiful in expression; "Were I in a desert I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections. If I could do no better, I would fasten them on some sweet myrtle, or some melancholy cypress, to connect myself to; I would court them for their shade, and greet them kindly for their protection. I would write my name upon them, and declare that they were the sweetest trees throughout all the desert. If their leaves withered, I would teach myself to mourn, and when they rejoiced I would rejoice along with them." Such is the absolute necessity which exists in the human heart of having something to love. Unless the affections have an object, life itself becomes joyless and insipid. The

affections have this peculiarity, that they are not so much the means of happiness, as their exercise is happiness itself. And not only so, if they have no object, the happiness derived from our other powers is cut off. Action and enterprise flag, if there be no object dear to the heart, to which those actions can be directed. The woman then, who has chosen a husband worthy of her affections, with a common share of this world's prosperity, has the highest possible chance for happiness. Her heart has found the very thing to which it was made to attach itself. It is filled and satisfied. She has now something to live for. All her powers of action are awakened to an energy which she never felt before. She has, moreover, guidance and protection. What more can she want? Her affections are the buoyant motives to her activity, and her activity is the more happy as it expresses and gratifies her affections. Thus life is absolutely full. Every day brings with it its own satisfactions. There is consequently no regret for the past, nor any necessity of postponing all happiness to the future.

Then, the affections are not only their own reward, their own happiness, but they are the

best teachers of duty. And here is an exhibition of Divine Wisdom which ought to call forth our perpetual admiration. As affection is the strongest motive to duty, so the wise Designer has secured the most intimate and fundamental relation by the strongest affection. No human legislation could enforce that treatment of husband and wife which is essential to the happiness of both. No interference from any source is of the least service, and happiness and all prospect of it, must be banished before there can be any appeal to a third party. But when two are united by true affection, the heart has given a bond of duty stronger than can be imposed by any compulsory obligation. Hence it is that marriage generally produces the best effect upon the female character. Indeed it may be said, that it always improves it, if it be capable of improvement.

There is no teacher like true affection. The Jewish and Christian religions vindicate their claim to a Divine origin as much as in any other way in the deep wisdom and philosophical truth upon which they are founded. They do not begin by saying, thou shalt do this or that, but they go deeper, and say, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and

with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," well knowing that these two commandments embrace all others. So in laying the foundations of society, the Creator based them upon affection. He made no outward law directing the conduct in the primary relations. He did not say to the first pair, "Ye shall treat each other thus and so." But he put between them those affections which are the best security of duty. He so formed their hearts, that they must involuntarily fulfil the first command, "Ye shall love each other with an affection, before which all others fade away;" an enactment which has lost nothing of its force, and which has in all ages led husband and wife, forsaking all other connexions, to cleave to each other, so as to all purposes of this life to become one, to be identified in feeling, purpose, interest, and endeavor.

Marriage generally improves the character of woman, not only because it puts her under the best possible tuition, that of the affections, and affords scope to her active energies, but because it gives her higher aims, and a more dignified position in society. Oh! how much there is of female talent and capacity, which

is never developed for want of an opportunity! Where education has been careful and thorough, there is a great development of power. Society, after the completion of school education, is the means of still further improvement. For a few years it fills the female mind. Every thing is fresh and new, and therefore interesting. One scene of gaiety after another absorbs and engrosses the attention. Emancipation from the confinement of school discipline, and the pleasures of free and independent action, are enough to make life pass agreeably away. But the time at length comes, when all these things begin to pall. The feeling begins occasionally to come over the young woman, that it is but a sorry account of human life, that it is spent in a perpetual round of frivolities. The human mind is made for serious realities, and never can be satisfied with any thing else. Unless supplied with these it loses its self respect. The mind unoccupied without, turns inward and preys upon itself. In this state of things the moral dispositions suffer. The temper cannot retain its sunny brightness, and a new generation coming forward with the charms of youth and beauty, is in no degree calculated to increase the self complacency of the woman

who has trod the whole round of the gaieties of the world. There is apt to arise about that time a critical spirit, which is not altogether pleased with things as they are. There is a fear of falling into neglect, which becomes watchfully suspicious of any signs of it. The generous feelings are too apt to contract, and the openness and freedom of earlier years give place to reserve. All these evils find their remedy in the new relations which marriage brings about. The affections having found their proper object, harmony and complacency are restored to the soul. The active powers having found something worthy of them to do, go forth in joyful exercise. The critical spirit disappears, and woman, finding herself embarked anew in the great voyage of life, feels disposed to cultivate the best feelings towards her fellow passengers.

If marriage places woman in that sphere where she may attain the greatest happiness, so does it advance her to a station of power and responsibility. Her power over her husband's happiness is almost absolute. By wisdom, by steadiness, by forbearance, by meekness, she may be to him a tower of strength. But no tongue can tell the ways

in which she may annoy and render him wretched.

The first thing to be watched over is the temper. Short of an absolute control of this, there is no happiness in married life. Repentment, just so far as it exists, and so long as it lasts, destroys that state of feeling, which constitutes the happiness of those who are connected by the most sacred tie. The proper affection finds its satisfaction in perpetual demonstrations of kindness. But what an altered and an awful condition of things when a state of feeling has arisen, which finds its highest gratification in crossing and vexing one another! Is it not highly dangerous then to indulge in such a state of feeling for a single moment? Alas! that there should be two human beings so mad and so unprincipled as to pursue such a course of conduct as this!

It is said, that there are few happy matches. Dr. Watts indeed, a century ago, wrote a celebrated poem under this title. If it be a fact, it is the blackest record against humanity. Those who enter into the marriage relation with true attachment, and become unhappy, are the most unfortunate and criminal of man-



kind, and they have none to blame but themselves. They are suicides in a double sense. One of the worst indications of the moral condition of our country, is the number of applications for divorce which are annually made to the legislatures in the different states. By this indication it would seem that we have sunk below even heathen morality. Such a thing as a divorce was not known in the Roman state for four centuries from its foundation. I never see an account of a case of this kind without picturing to myself the deep misery which must precede, accompany, and follow such a proceeding. You never read the details of a divorce, except in cases of gross immorality, without recognising the fact, that the great cause of connubial unhappiness is want of mutual forbearance and self control.

As a wife's control over her husband's happiness is almost unlimited, so is her influence over his fortunes. Some women make it a matter of pride and of boast that they govern their husbands, and consider it a mark of their superiority. The very attempt is a proof of the contrary. It is only the foolish and the weak that can ever even wish to do

so. Such a boast is equally disgraceful to both parties. The will too, often bears an inverse proportion to the other powers of the mind. And you sometimes find women who seem to be little else than the incarnation of a fierce and indomitable will. Such women will have their way, it is true, because a wise man will sacrifice much for peace. But it is no more government than it is when a mob gets the mastery of a town. They govern, it is true, because all government is suspended.

A woman has her husband's fortunes in her power, because she may, or she may not, as she pleases, conform to his circumstances. This is her first duty, and it ought to be her pride. No passion for luxury or display ought for a moment to tempt her to deviate in the least degree from this line of conduct. She will find her happiness and her respectability in it. Any other course is wretchedness itself, and inevitably leads to ruin. Nothing can be more miserable than the struggle to keep up an appearance. If it could succeed, it would cost more than it is worth, and as it never can, its failure involves the deepest mortification. Some of the sublimest exhibitions of human virtue have been made by women, who

have been precipitated suddenly from wealth and splendor to absolute want. It costs perhaps the mightiest struggle which the mind can make to conform at once and without a murmur to altered circumstances; but when it is over, it brings its own rich reward. There is no other way but to submit, and begin to spin the web of hope and endeavor anew.

Then a man's fortunes are in a manner in the hands of his wife, inasmuch as his own power of exertion depends on her. His moral strength is inconceivably increased by her sympathy, her counsel, her aid. She can aid him immensely by relieving him of every care which she is capable of taking upon herself. His own employments are usually such to require his whole time, and his whole mind. A good wife will never suffer her husband's attention to be distracted by details, to which her own time and talents are adequate. If she be prompted by true affection and good sense, she will perceive when his spirit is borne down and overwhelmed. She of all human beings can best minister to its needs. For the sick soul her nursing is quite as sovereign, as it is for corporeal ills. If it be

weary, in her assiduity it finds repose and refreshment. If it be harassed and worn to a morbid irritability, her gentle tones steal over it with a soothing more potent than the most exquisite music. If every enterprise be dead, and hope itself almost extinguished, her patience and fortitude have the power to rekindle them in the heart, and he again goes forth to renew his encounter with the toils and troubles of life.

A woman has it in her power to add greatly to a man's respectability in the world, and to determine his social position. Indeed his pleasant relations with society depend mainly on her wisdom, her prudence, her kind and conciliatory manners. She cannot make herself odious and contemptible without reflecting ill will and disgrace upon him. She cannot indulge in a meddlesome, censorious, bitter, vindictive disposition, without subjecting him to continual mortification, and involving him in perpetual difficulty and embarrassment.

We come in the next place to speak of woman in the most important and responsible relation which she sustains, as the mother. In this relation Providence fully makes up to her the inferiority of her physical powers, the

narrowness of her sphere of action, and the alleged inferiority of her intellectual endowments. In the influence she has in forming the character of the young, and training up each rising generation as it comes forward, and assumes the control of the destinies of the world, she has her full share in that power which sways and governs mankind, which makes nations, families, individuals great, prosperous, virtuous, happy,—or mean, degraded, vicious and wretched. Woman is mistress of the fortunes of the world, by holding in her plastic hand the minds and hearts of those who are to mould the coming age, at that decisive period when the character is determined and fixed in good, or irrecoverably bent on vice and mischief. She governs the world in the capacity of mother, because in the forming period of life, the cords of love and gentleness are stronger and more prevailing than all the chains which mere force has ever forged. She sways the world, because her influence is on the whole paramount in the primary element of all society, the domestic circle. Men go forth to act their parts on the great stage of life, the most gifted to exert vast influence over its affairs, but it

is only to act out the character that has been formed at home. Woman then, whose control over the character is almost absolute, presides at the very fountain head of power.

"What is wanting," said Napoleon one day to Mad. Campan, "in order that the youth of France may be well educated?" "Good mothers," was her reply. There could not have been more wisdom condensed into so few words. The greatest treasure a nation can possess is good mothers. Their aggregate influence is greater than all the rest which operate to form the character of a people. Man's task is abroad. He must elaborate his sustenance from the soil, under the heats and the rains of heaven, or tempt the waves of the boisterous ocean, or wind the labyrinths of trade, or seclude himself in the retirement of his study. He cannot know much of his children in their earlier years. The responsibility, of course, is thrown almost entirely on the mother. If she abandons her trust, then are the children lost indeed. While the father is consuming his days and nights in toil, that his children may begin life on the vantage ground of wealth and education, his children, through the negligence or bad man-

agement of the mother, may be forming moral habits which will make every care for their fortunes worse than thrown away. The mother has it in her power to form the moral sentiments of her children, and thus to make them either the ornaments or the scourges of society. Unless she co-operates, all that is done by others is to no purpose. The father may hire instructors for his children, but if the mother, instead of aiding them in their tasks, and exacting a scrupulous attention to their studies, is indifferent or negligent, his money is in a great measure thrown away. It is in vain that the father tries to keep them out of bad company, if as soon as he is out of the way, the mother listens to their tears and entreaties, and suffers them to go where they please. It is in vain that he would train them to energy, industry and self-denial, if she persists in indulging them in idleness, sloth, and effeminacy. And if, through a weak fondness and want of decision, she supplies them with money against their father's wishes, their ruin is sealed. Nothing more is wanted to make them profligates and vagabonds.

One of the strongest evidences of the goodness of the Author of our being is the

guardianship he has prepared for us in a mother's heart. There could no other bond be given so strong of our well being. No where could our young and helpless existence nestle so safely as upon a mother's breast. The first we know of life is that we are watched over by the most untiring and sleepless care. The cradle nook from which we first look forth upon the world, has been prepared for us by the most disinterested affection. The first tones to which we listen are those of unutterable love. Thus provision has been made, that the heart should receive the earliest culture. The affections are exercised before the understanding is at all developed. The angel of prayer hovers over its slumbers before one temptation has been permitted to approach.

What deep and infinite emotions rush through the heart at the sight of sleeping infancy! What a shrine of tenderness! What a prophecy of the future! What a symbol of hope! What a crowd of anticipations cluster around the young heir of the world! What a vision of joys and sorrows rises up before the mind as it penetrates the dim vista of coming years, which wait to receive this inheritor of the lot of humanity! Those little hands, how elo-



quently do they gesticulate in their ceaseless graspings, the old and irrevocable sentence of toil! On that miniature brow, Thought and Care already perch beside the Majesty of Reason. In that bosom the lion and the lamb are still slumbering together in utter unconsciousness. Those alternate smiles and tears, how emblematic of the storms and sunshine of coming life! That feeble wail, how does it chime in with the undertone of sadness which is heard in all the music of this life. Those little feet, what path shall they tread,—where shall they wander, and where shall they find their final rest?

Such are the thoughts, which must often pass through the mind of a mother. Such are the musings to which she must be often led when she watches in solitude over the child of her hopes and affections. But let her know, while these thousand conflicting emotions are agitating her bosom, that it depends on her more than any other human being to say, whether her hopes or her fears shall be realized.

Among the thoughts, which send a pang into a mother's heart, as she gazes upon her babe, is the slender hold by which she pos-

sesses her precious treasure. She knows that one half of these beautiful buds wither and fall before they come to maturity. She feels that her watching and toils may all be in vain. But not in vain, another instinct assures her. There is an instinct within her, deeper and surer than any written revelation, that not one of these little ones is forgotten before God. She feels, that if the child of her affections is early torn from her embrace, it is only to be laid in the bosom of Infinite Love. She reasons, that if God provided such a circle of warm hearts to receive it at its advent into this world, merely because it is the creature of his forming hand, much more should he prepare a ministry of kind affections to welcome it into that world, where it has already a representing angel before the throne of God.

The impress of our heavenly origin and destination is brightest and freshest upon us in our earliest years. A beautiful child or infant seems more like a celestial inhabitant lent to us for a while, than one of the creatures of this earth, which sin soon tarnishes, and suffering disfigures. As a living poet has well described our natural feelings with regard to

the connection of the young with an invisible world:

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar :

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home :

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !

Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy,

But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy ;

The Youth, who daily farther from the East

Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,

And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended ;

At length the Man perceives it die away,

And fade into the light of common day.”

No human being has so much power to preserve this primeval image of heaven in the soul as the mother. Peculiarly susceptible of religious emotion herself, she can communicate it more effectually than any other instructor. The lessons she teaches are never forgotten. They will recur with the softened image of

her memory to remotest years. The prayers, that are said around her knees, will be instinctively murmured by the lips of extreme age.

It is in her power to fill their minds with every honorable and noble sentiment, to establish in them a stern regard for truth, and justice, and integrity. This, it is true, can be done in no other way than by cherishing those principles herself. As far as my own experience goes, I can say that the mother's influence is paramount and irresistible. So accustomed am I to trace home to its source the moral character I see developed by my acquaintance, that where I see honor, delicacy, integrity, humanity, exhibited in an uncommon degree, I say to myself, "That man had a good mother," and on inquiry I find myself not often mistaken. The sympathy of childhood is so strong with the bosom from which it first drew its life, that every feeling and sentiment of the mother vibrates through its whole being. The mother, if she pleases, may form in her children the habit of candor, charity, and fairness, or she may fill them with the most bitter and unrelenting prejudices against any class of persons, whom she may

choose to represent in an odious light. Nay, the very epithets she uses will be for many years decisive of the feelings of her children with regard to individuals, and even masses of society. Such is the weakness of human nature, that we are all educated with a greater or less amount of prejudices, and one of the hardest tasks of life is to unlearn the prepossessions of the cradle, and to appreciate with fairness those whom we were early taught to despise or to detest. It follows of course then, that every moral obliquity of the mother is almost sure to be reflected in the character of the children. If she begins with a course of finesse and deceit, it will not be long before she will find them as expert as herself, and she will probably be the first person upon whom they will make their experiments.

The motives, which operate upon the mother to induce her to fidelity, are stronger than are presented to any moral agent in this world, for to none is this world a scene of juster retribution. If she be faithful to her trust, her sons grow up to honor and success. As she sees them mount up to the high places of wealth or station, or moving in an humbler sphere in peace and prosperity, with

a proud satisfaction she may point to them and say with the Roman matron, "These are my jewels." The very virtues she has cherished in their hearts secure to her that respectful and affectionate attention, which is so soothing to the decline of life, and prepare her to leave the world with the satisfactory reflection, that she has not lived in vain. She will see her daughters adorning whatever sphere they are called to fill. In the good wife and mother she will see the fruit of that domestic training which she so anxiously gave them, and in their appreciation in society the influence of those talents which she cultivated; and in the unfeigned piety of sons and daughters the reward of her prayers and instructions, and the pledge that she shall at length present herself and them faultless and unblemished before the throne of God with exceeding joy.

But if she be unfaithful to her trust, if she choose to turn her children over to nurses and governesses, that she may give herself up to fashion and frivolity, if by a foolish indulgence she train them up to idleness and effeminacy, or suffer them to mingle with the dissolute and unprincipled, she will be the

first to suffer. Her heart will be pierced through with sorrows that the world knows not of. Her days will be passed in heaviness, and her nights in tears, and feeling existence blighted in its highest ends, she will be tempted to curse the day of her birth.

There is another class of females which is too numerous to pass over in silence, whose relations to society are not so complex, yet still most interesting and important, those who have declined to identify their lot with one of the opposite sex. There is a tone of ridicule adopted by the world when speaking of this most respectable and deserving class of persons, which I must confess always grates upon my ear as unfeeling and unjust. If the history of the human heart could be told, it would be found that they are oftener the victims of society than the recusants of the primary institution of God. They have been doomed to the evil or the good of a single life by domestic tyranny, or family pride, by the treachery of their own sex, or the unworthiness or falsehood of the other. But whatever may be the human agency by which their condition has been determined, they seem to constitute in the designs of

Providence a sort of corps de reserve. As no wise general brings all his forces into the field at once, but keeps back a part to supply deficiencies, to remedy accidents, to throw in their aid at emergencies; so are unmarried women stationed up and down in life to aid the weak, to take the places of those who are cloven down in battle, or of those who refuse to do their duty. So far from meriting the reproaches of the married portion of mankind, they have their full share of the labors of life with fewer of its rewards. So far from being drones in the hive, their lives are especially set apart to good works. Being less closely connected with the world, their labors are more disinterested. Is any one in trouble, the resort is immediately to them. They are in fact the sisters of charity to the whole species. While the thoughts of others are shut up in themselves and their families, theirs go abroad to seek out the helpless and unfortunate; and the destitute and forgotten find in them an advocate and a friend when otherwise there would be none to care for their relief. It will be found that among them all benevolent enterprises find their most efficient support. And when the young, the



gay, and the prosperous are pursuing their pleasures, are glittering in splendored halls, or treading the mazes of the dance, these faithful souls are toiling over those household duties which the gay and thoughtless have forgotten, or are watching by the bed side of pain and death.

If they refused to form the closer tie in life with the design of keeping aloof from all attachments and cares, they find themselves mistaken. They have women's hearts, and it is impossible for them to shut up their affections. The sister soon becomes the aunt, and the mother's feelings become developed without the mother's relation. She finds herself agitated with all the anxieties, the hopes and fears of a mother, and she is prompted to a mother's toils and self sacrifice without the certainty of meeting that return of gratitude and affection which instinct vindicates to the nearer relation. In the meantime the very fact of her having no especial protector subjects her to neglect and to injustice from which the matron is exempt. For there are too many mean spirits in this world, who want no other temptation to commit an injury than the assurance that they may do so with

impunity. The danger then, to which the single woman is exposed, is of becoming soured with the world, from which she certainly receives much that is not calculated to elevate it in her conceptions. Her peril is that of becoming peevish, querulous, and bitter, of visiting upon all the ill treatment she receives from a few. Her triumph is to maintain under all circumstances serenity, candor, generosity, and magnanimity. Her reward is to find sufficient happiness and gratification in doing good for its own sake, in proving superior to all the vexations she suffers from the mean, the heartless, and the base.

While we are contemplating the sphere and duties of woman, she presents herself in one more relation, and that the most affecting of all, the condition of the widow. That tie so tender and so close, the source of so much happiness, and which revolving years serve only more and more to endear, confers no exemption from the great law of mortality, and is liable to be terminated by death. Then indeed do we see joy turned into mourning. There we see a broken heart,—smitten to the earth by the most mysterious of all Heaven's dispensations. Her heart's

idol is gone, and what does the world contain beside? Her companion is taken away, and her house is left unto her desolate. The arm on which she leaned is withdrawn, and she must finish the journey of life alone. The heart that beat for her is for ever still. The mind, whose every thought was care for her, has departed to the spirit land. The presence, in which alone it was life for her to live, is no more found on earth, and how could she ever dare to hope again, were there not One above, who has called himself the widow's God?

For a while she is utterly overwhelmed. The world is shrouded in a universal pall. It no longer seems to contain any thing worth living for. She is awakened at last from the stupor of grief by the reflection that this world, if it can be no longer enjoyed, must still be endured. She is still further roused by the fact, that she must not only suffer, but act. She finds a melancholy refuge in the thought, that if she can no longer live for herself, she can and must live for her children. Renouncing then, all those wide and boundless expectations of happiness, in which the imagination loves to revel, she contracts her

hopes to the successful care of the fatherless. In this hope and employment she finds tranquillity and a measure of enjoyment. Her character and talents are drawn upon for their last resources, and it is surprising how often they are found equal to the emergency. Women brought up in tenderness and luxury, without the knowledge or the tact for business, are found, when compelled by necessity to make exertions, to manage their affairs with skill and ability. If there be in them any materials of character, they are now brought out and consolidated. The stern realities of life put to flight its phantasies and its follies, and impart to it that measure of wisdom and strength which it is capable of receiving.

Her children, if any she have, are at first the source of indescribable anxiety. She is tempted by the difficulties of her situation, and the dark-boding fancies of future ill which gather into her anticipations of coming years, to wish that she had never been a mother. But Providence knew better what was for her good. Those children, which are now the objects of so much solicitude, become to her the greatest blessings. They are the only tie which connects her with the world. God is

the God of the fatherless as well as of the widow. The more straitened their circumstances the more propitious to the formation of character. The necessity of early exertion and self-dependence is the best possible discipline to character and talent. Indeed there is nothing else which can give the mind a perfect training to all excellence. Nothing but this can form the habits to that industry, frugality, sobriety and perseverance, which are the only sure foundation for permanent prosperity. In short, such a beginning of life trains up just such men as the world wants, as it will employ and reward. And thus it is that the world is in perpetual revolution. While the sons of the wealthy by idleness, or folly, or want of business talent, dissipate their hereditary estates, and fall from the high places of society, the sons of the widow find their way into the places of business, the stations of honor, the offices of trust and power. And the widow who sent her children forth into the world from the abode of poverty, often passes the evening of her days with them in affluence and splendor.

Such is the lot of woman, a mingled scene of joys and sorrows, smiles and tears. It

might fill the heart with an infinite sadness, were it not that it is a slight exaggeration only of the common lot of humanity, and were we not assured that woman's peculiar constitution exactly fits her for her sphere. In her deeper affections, in her more lively imagination, in her profounder trustfulness she finds a compensation for all. And when to human eye the blackest night has settled about her, the star of religious faith rises to dissipate the gloom. It sheds upon her path its calm, benignant beam, till the morning breaks which ushers in eternal day.



## LECTURE V.

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### ON THE EDUCATION OF WOMAN.



HAVING taken a general view of the sphere and duties of woman, we are the better prepared to decide what is that training which will best fit her for them. That is the question which we propose in the present lecture to discuss, how is woman to be educated to be useful, agreeable, and happy? It is a question of transcendent importance, for a new generation is continually coming forward, and receiving that culture, which will make them the ornaments of society, the delight of the domestic circle, the innocent and happy participants of the pleasures of this life, or useless cumberers of the ground, unhappy in themselves, and the cause of misery to others.

A great change has undoubtedly taken place in public sentiment upon this subject within the last half century. Then it was thought sufficient to give to women a merely useful education, to teach them the plain household duties, how to cook, and make, and mend, how to conduct with prudence and economy their domestic affairs. The libraries, to which it was thought necessary that they should have access, were very small. Mrs. Glass' *Art of Cooking* made plain and easy, Pilgrim's *Progress*, and the seven tedious volumes of Sir Charles Grandison, were too often the literary apparatus, by which our grandmothers were to be made good wives, fine ladies, and pious Christians. Then there succeeded a rage for accomplishments. To sing, to play, and speak French, these were the essentials of a good education. It was found however, that singing and playing were soon given over, and like the singing of certain insects it made no provision for the winter of age, and it was discovered that it was quite as agreeable to talk folly in English as French, and a great deal less trouble. Then came the fashion for graver studies, Mathematics, the Ancient Languages, Logic and Metaphysics.



Thus opinions upon female education have completed the cycle, and undergone a complete revolution. They have been useful, inasmuch as they have exhibited the different aspects of an important subject. They were each imperfect, not because they were untrue, but because they did not present the whole truth. That education is good, not which holds to the one and despises the other, but that which embraces them all. Each of them looks to a different relation in which woman is placed, one to making her useful in the narrowest utilitarian sense, another to making her agreeable, and the third would give her resources of happiness within herself. The woman who has received a proportionate culture in each of these departments is educated, is made as perfect as she is capable of becoming.

I place the education to domestic duties first, as essential and indispensable. No woman is educated who is not equal to the successful management of a family. Although it does not require so much talent to rule a household as it does to govern a state, still it requires talents of the same kind. As he makes the best general who has begun at the lowest post, and passed up through every grade

of office, as he makes the best admiral who entered the navy in the most inferior station, because they and they alone are acquainted with the whole compass of a subaltern's duty, so that woman will manage a family with the greatest ease and efficiency, who knows experimentally the duties of every member of it. Daughters who neglect this part of education are entirely without excuse, and their mothers are still more to blame. The very apology, which is often made for the neglect of it, is the greatest condemnation of those who offer it. It is said by those who are growing up in ignorance of these things; "Any one can learn how to keep house when it is necessary. Any one, who loves her husband, and is devoted to his interests, will make herself accomplished in those things as soon as she is married." I confess that such reasoning as this fills me with astonishment. As well might the young man say; "Of what use is it for me to learn a profession, or make myself acquainted with the details of any business. When I am married, if I love my wife, it will then be time enough to learn a profession, or to accomplish myself in the details of business." Would there be

any surer omen of total failure and discomfiture? It is much more to be feared that a total deficiency in their appropriate spheres will destroy mutual respect, and finally mutual affection, than to be hoped that affection in a few weeks will remedy the defects of years. A girl should learn to do every thing that a woman can ever be called upon to do or to oversee. That, which a woman can learn to do in a few months under the tuition of love, can certainly be learned to much greater advantage under the tuition of a mother. If it is all so easy to learn, then certainly they are utterly inexcusable who neglect it. It is no degradation to the finest lady to know all the details of domestic affairs. It is honorable, and ought to be her pride. A woman, though she may be as beautiful as the morning, as wise as Minerva, and as accomplished as the Graces, ought to know all the details of house affairs. She ought to know how every thing is preserved and kept in order. She ought to know how every thing is cooked that is an article of food, how every thing is cut out, made and mended, that is worn, and what is the ordinary cost and consumption of the various articles of domestic use. It will be

to her neither injury nor degradation if she add to these the accomplishments of an able accountant and negotiator. The duties of nurse she must learn at some period of her life by the stern constraint of necessity, and the sooner they are learned the better.

These are the domestic accomplishments which are indispensable to a good wife, and it is all a miserable delusion to imagine that they can be acquired on occasion. Nothing but practice can make us perfect in any thing. As these are duties which must inevitably fall to the lot of woman, be she high or low, rich or poor, she cannot neglect them in early life without being false to her most important interests. All the experience she gets under the instructions of a mother will increase her chance of happiness whenever she shall be called to preside over a family. I counsel every mother and daughter to take this matter into serious consideration as vital to domestic happiness and permanent prosperity. There is nothing more embarrassing than to be thrown into a condition, in which we do not know how to act, especially when it is for the want of that knowledge which we are expected to possess. This is precisely the

practical knowledge which the wife wants every day of her life, and without it her life cannot be comfortable, or scarcely respectable. So vital is this knowledge, that without it the day of marriage, instead of the commencement of happiness, is the beginning of misery. No husband can long respect a wife whom he finds destitute of the commonest qualifications for her station. No woman can long command respect from her household, who hourly displays an incapacity for its management. She must know enough to govern her subordinates, or they will govern her. From them she cannot hide her deficiencies, and it will not be long before they learn to take advantage of them. Without that system, which practical knowledge alone can bring about, her house will be a scene of waste and disorder, of discomfort and insubordination. To a housewife knowledge is power, ignorance is weakness. To the head of a family knowledge is happiness, ignorance is misery.

I count it therefore a most melancholy sight when I see a mother bringing up her daughters in utter ignorance of household affairs, and of course for all the practical duties in utter inefficiency. It is as much

cruelty and injustice as to neglect to have them taught to read and write. The effect moreover upon the character is bad. It is only by action, by responsible action that the character can be formed to strength and energy. There is no other way to inspire confidence and courage. It is only by experience of the past that we can gain faith for the future. That we can perform the duties of to-morrow would seem to us utterly incredible, had we not performed the duties of yesterday. There is scarcely a greater happiness, I will not say source of happiness, but rather a greater enjoyment, than the sense of power arising from having done something. The feeling, "I can do this or that, which is necessary to my well being. I am not destitute of resource. Place me where you will, and I shall know what to do, and how to do it," is the source of infinite satisfaction. On the contrary, the sense of helplessness and inefficiency, arising from never having proved our powers, even if we have them, is the source of despondency and depression. I therefore counsel every young woman, who hears me this night, to resolve that whether encouraged in it or not, she will know both by theory

and practice every thing that can be known of domestic affairs. You owe it to yourselves and your own happiness. A life of energy and action is the only life worth living. Woman was not made to dream away a sickly existence over sentiment, and castle-building, and the trifles of the day. She is made for duty, for action, for usefulness, and it is only when thus employed that she feels her existence ennobled and exalted, and her life redeemed from utter nothingness and vacuity.

Then there are even graver considerations, which ought to induce you to gain all the practical knowledge that comes within your reach at an early period of life. It is impossible for you to know before hand how you are to spend the three score years and ten of life, if you are spared so long. Time makes fearful revolutions in the condition of mankind, particularly of women. Reverses are sufficiently severe when they fall upon the stronger sex. It is difficult for them to bear up under their troubles, it is difficult for them to provide for their wants on the most limited scale. What then is the condition of a woman thrown upon her own resources? I would not detail to you, if I had the time,

what I myself have seen of sad and sudden reverse, of unprotected females precipitated in a moment from comfortable circumstances to abject want; widows accustomed to luxury and abundance, suddenly stripped of all, and surrounded with young children, asking in vain for bread. With the best training, the condition is a melancholy one. It is alleviated and rendered tolerable precisely in proportion to the previous development of business habits and practical industry. With these, no condition is desperate. This is a world of labor, and it is ordained that those shall prosper who are willing to toil. But the willingness may exist without the capacity. The very habit and faculty of keeping accounts, has saved many a woman from want; and been the means of training a rising family to usefulness and respectability. From these reverses no woman is exempt, the most affluent are perhaps most exposed to them. They may take place without their fault, or the fault of any one with whom they are immediately connected. It is fearful to see how soon death may place a solitude about a person, who is now surrounded by troops of relatives and friends. To be convinced what fearful



changes time brings over the world, we have only to look back a few years, and consider who were the rich and distinguished, and who occupied the most conspicuous places in the public view. Where are they now? The following years will produce the same changes, and who are to be affected by them, it is impossible to foresee.

But death and misfortune are not the only causes of the loss of fortune. In cities there is another quite as prolific, the misconduct of husbands. Young ladies of wealth and expectations are ever surrounded by a set of young men, whom it is needless to describe, without character, talent or business, whose whole stock in trade is dandyism, dissipation and impudence, and whose whole adventure in life is to insinuate themselves into the affections of some unsuspecting heiress.

Those who have the misfortune to fall into the hands of such a pirate, are almost sure sooner or later to be stripped of all, and then perhaps treated with the utmost cruelty and neglect. Every young woman, no matter how great her expectations or possessions, may be destined to meet such a fate as this. She will be best prepared for the crisis, who

has the best practical knowledge of affairs, of the various cares and duties, which may, by any possibility, fall to the lot of woman. And I should consider the labor of composing these lectures amply repaid if I were persuaded that they would be the means of inducing one young lady to resolve that she would thoroughly accomplish herself in all household duties. The Jews had a custom, which cannot be too much commended, of adding to the most finished education, the practical knowledge of some trade, so that the great and the noble might have a resource, if deprived of their possessions, which would prevent their becoming utterly helpless and desperate. It was this practice which gave the noble Apostle of the Gentiles, high born and liberally educated as he was, the glory of preaching the Gospel, while with his own hands he ministered to his necessities.

But let it not be supposed from what I have now said, that I am a Utilitarian in the narrow and bigoted sense of that term, that I would exclude the accomplishments, or even that I think them of little worth. I would have woman agreeable as well as useful. Nay, the agreeable is the useful in the highest

sense. Every thing is useful, which innocently ministers to human happiness. Accomplishments do thus minister to the most blameless enjoyment. Let a girl be taught music, and dancing, and drawing, if she have a taste for it, though of the latter I entertain more doubt. Let her have every accomplishment which will enable her to adorn, delight and enjoy society.

I am no enemy to the pleasures of refined society. I only oppose its follies and its abuses. I am opposed to its abuses for the very reason that I esteem and value its uses. I look with sorrow on its extravagant expense and ridiculously late hours, only because I consider such perversions as calculated to destroy the pleasures and the usefulness of that which is in itself good. We are not made only to toil. We are made likewise to enjoy its rewards. There is a generous impulse to impart the avails of our labor to others. We are not made for selfish, solitary enjoyment. We increase our pleasures by sharing them with others. Society is an instinct. When we are happy, we call together our friends and neighbors, saying, "Rejoice with us." That most exquisite parable of the prodigal son, an emanation of celestial power and

beauty, makes, without blame, that joyful event, the return of the lost one, to be celebrated with music and dancing; and even the kingdom of heaven itself is represented under the similitude of a feast. Our Saviour ministered by his first miracle to the festivities of a wedding, and he did not refuse that mark of hospitable respect, a supper, in the family which he most loved. The expression of social and benevolent feeling, by some emphatic action, is the most effectual way to cultivate and strengthen that feeling. The same feeling of mutual respect, and desire to confer pleasure, bids us receive our friends with such decorations of the rites of hospitality as our circumstances can afford. Such a use of wealth, so far from being immoral, I am inclined to consider as among the noblest and the best. If any one is disposed to object, "Why this waste, why were not these things sold, and the money given to the poor," he must remember that this objection is taken from the mouth of Judas Iscariot. We have higher authority for saying, that the expense is not thrown away which expresses generous and noble sentiments. The pleasures of society and hospitality are the just and

proper rewards of those who toil. Every generation has a right to spend its own money, and is by no means bound to deny itself that the next may live in idleness.

Society, when enjoyed in moderation, is the natural and innocent means of refreshing the spirits after the exhaustion of labor and care. To the pleasures of society they can best contribute who still enjoy the rich endowments of youth, health, beauty, grace and vivacity. We would not have them prematurely old. They are what they are, beautiful, joyous, graceful, for the very purpose of enlivening this sad and sombre world, just as childhood is made with an exuberance of animal spirits, that by its noisy sports and shouts of gladness, it may drive away gloom from that apartment where sits age in silence and despondence. Let woman then be so educated as to enjoy to the utmost those pleasures which are appropriate to youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when she shall say, "I have no pleasure in them."

Music is certainly one of the most blameless and refined of all enjoyments. It seems to be just so much innocent pleasure created out of nothing. It is as it were a voice from the

Universal Harmony, speaking to us from the invisible world. Like Poetry, it is certainly in alliance with the better part of our nature. The ancient fable that Orpheus tamed and drew after him the wild beasts of the wood by the strains of his lyre, is nothing more than a symbolical representation of the fact, that when the spell of Music is upon us, the bad passions are hushed in profound repose, and the good affections awake and entrance the soul with visions of whatever of good, and great, and tender, and beautiful we have ever experienced or imagined. Then pass before us, with the distinctness and reality of a dream, the long lost scenes of youth and home. Then forms and faces reappear that have long since been hid in darkness, and eyes beam upon us with more than living tenderness and intelligence, which now are quenched in death. The soul for a moment is freed from the dominion of what is most painful and depressing in our condition, and revels in all the joys of the past, the present, and the future. Sickness forgets its pains, sorrow suspends its sigh, age loses the consciousness of wrinkles and gray hairs, the exile is restored to his native shores, and the soul, freed in some measure

from the environments of time and space, catches glimpses, more perfect, perhaps, than at any other time of that state which the poet has so eloquently described;

“When coldness wraps this suffering clay,  
Ah! whither strays the immortal mind?  
It cannot die, it cannot stay,  
But leaves its darkened dust behind.  
Then, unembodied, doth it trace  
By steps each planet’s heavenly way?  
Or fill at once the realms of space,  
A thing of eyes, that all survey?

“Eternal, boundless, undecay’d,  
A thought unseen, but seeing all,  
All, all in earth, or skies display’d,  
Shall it survey, shall it recall:  
Each fainter trace that memory holds  
So darkly of departed years,  
In one broad glance the soul beholds,  
And all, that was, at once appears.”

Let the daughter be instructed in music if she have the talent for it. Nothing more enlivens and adorns the domestic circle. Nothing furnishes a more innocent and refreshing recreation for family and social gatherings, which are the best preservatives against the tempta-

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tions that are every where laid in the way of the young.

But the day for accomplishments is brief and soon passes away. The time soon comes when the exercise of the accomplishments becomes both tasteless and inappropriate. The bloom of youth no longer sits upon the cheek, and grace and symmetry have departed from the form and motions. With those attractions a measure of that attention, which they once commanded, begins to fall off. How desolate the condition of that woman who has cultivated nothing else! Then appears the necessity of the third branch of female education, which I intend in what remains of this lecture strongly to urge upon your attention, the cultivation of the mind. To this a woman is bound by a regard for her own happiness. The day must come when she will be thrown upon her own resources. Those resources must exist mainly in her own mind. If she seeks society after the day of accomplishments is over, her pleasures must then be intellectual, and her attractions too. The beauties of a well stored mind will still draw around her a circle of eager listeners, when the charms of her person are gone. A sensible and brilliant conversation



will attract the notice of the well educated of the other sex more than a coronet of jewels. At home, where most of her time must be passed, many an hour will hang heavily if its vacuity be not supplied by books. Books will afford no effectual aid, unless a taste for them has been early cultivated. What is a woman to do with herself at home or abroad, whose education has fitted her only for the enjoyment of the bloom of life? Her heart and soul are still in scenes and occupations which are appropriate only to the young, and her employment too often becomes the retail of the merest trifles of the time. Without the stores of knowledge and of thought she is overtaken by the shadows of the evening of life without that dignity which is the proper ornament of age. Habits of intellectual culture it is then too late to acquire. It is only early mental discipline which can render reading either agreeable or useful in advanced life. The great entertainments of all ages are reading, conversation, and thought. If our existence, especially after middle life, is not enriched by these, it becomes meagre and dull indeed. And these will prove sources of pleasure just in proportion

to previous intellectual culture. How is that mind to have subject matter of pleasurable thought during its solitary hours, which has no knowledge of the treasures of literature and science, which has made no extensive acquaintance with the distant and the past? And what is conversation between those who know nothing? But on the other hand what delight is that mind enabled to receive and impart, which is able to discuss any topic that comes up with accuracy, copiousness, eloquence, and beauty! The woman, who possesses this power, can never fail to render herself agreeable and useful in any circle into which she may be thrown, and when she is so she cannot fail to be happy. A full mind, a large heart, and an eloquent tongue are among the most precious of human things. The young forsake their sports and gather round, the old draw nigh to hear, and all involuntarily bow down to the supremacy of mind. These endowments add brilliancy to youth and beauty, and when all other charms are departed they make old age sacred, venerable, beloved.

I never read that heartless jest of Pope without a species of indignation.

“Most women have no characters at all.”

If it were a fact, which it is not, who is to blame for it? In nine cases out of ten, those who have withheld from them a proper and sufficient education. Knowledge and enlightened culture are the only basis of character. The mind can wax strong only by exercise. Withhold from the mind intellectual discipline, books and intelligent society, and fill it with a succession of trifles, and how can it be otherwise than empty and frivolous? To the cultivated and uncultivated mind the opportunities of observation, which intercourse with the world affords, are a totally different thing. Intellectual culture gives a keener and deeper insight to the mental vision, and confers the power of reading at a glance, what the uncultivated spell out only by syllables and never thoroughly understand. Decision and strength of character can rest on no other legitimate basis than that of a well informed mind. How can a woman have character without culture? Decision without knowledge is rashness and presumption, firmness not grounded on sufficient reason is nothing but obstinacy and perverseness.

The world is ever complaining that women are led away by every new infatuation that

comes along to dazzle and delude. But such complaints are altogether unreasonable until women are educated to that discipline of mind and extent of knowledge, which will enable them to detect imposture and explode pretension the moment they appear.

Thorough and general education of women brings with it a remedy for that reproach which is so often brought against learned ladies, that they are apt to be conceited and pedantic. If thorough female education were more common, it would cease to be a matter of distinction, and of course a matter of vanity. Besides, pedantry in man or woman is not the sign of a perfect education, but the sure evidence of a defective one. Perfect manners are displayed in entire simplicity. Form and pomp are the unfailing indication of defective breeding and bad taste. The truly learned and well educated man is the last to make any parade of his erudition. He is always unpretending, and instead of loading his speech with long and hard words, he shows his scholarship by the perfect accuracy, good sense, and taste with which he converses about the most common things. So the thoroughly educated woman never tells you that she has

studied Homer and read Faust, that she has made herself acquainted with the mysteries of Algebra and Conic Sections, or labors by any indirection to lead you to infer that she has done so; but she gives you higher proof of her careful training, by the correctness, the elegance, and the knowledge with which she discusses every subject as it comes up. Let no young lady be deterred from literary pursuits by the senseless outcry which is sometimes raised against learned women, or the odious epithets which are applied to them by the weak and the empty of the other sex. Such reproaches are usually the resort of little minds to keep themselves in countenance in the want of those mental accomplishments, which it is a disgrace to them not to possess. The fear, which such men express of superior women, is by no means feigned; and as fear is always ungenerous, they attempt to wound at a distance that force, which they dare not openly encounter. Let no sensible and strong minded woman apprehend that she will lose any thing worth retaining by a high literary and intellectual culture. She may be passed by the shallow and the superficial, but it will be only to attract the sensible and the well in-

formed. If others keep aloof, she may console herself with the reflection that it is because they have nothing to say that is worth hearing. Let every young woman be assured, that every hour she devotes to study in early life will increase her future happiness, will add brilliancy to her charms if she have beauty, and will make up for its deficiency when it is wanting, will make her welcome and at home in all companies, and put her at ease in all situations. It will sharpen her powers of observation, and enable her to detect and draw out talent, which would otherwise have passed unnoticed. It will redeem from silence and dulness many an hour which otherwise would have been a total blank. It will draw attention and command respect, amid the wreck of all personal charms, and the memory of it will confer a kind of sacredness upon the bent and feeble form, when mind itself has faded out.

There is nothing more delightful than the conversation of a sensible and well educated woman. It is a perpetual feast. Her quick feelings and lively imagination enable her to paint what she has seen and experienced in livelier colors and more glowing language than

the duller perceptions and greater reserve of the other sex make it possible for them to employ. There are lights and shades in human things, which would pass altogether unperceived, were they not reflected from the clear, pure mirror of the female mind. The prose of this monotonous life becomes poetry in her lips, and its dullest scenes are illuminated by her fancy, images, and illustrations, just as the landscape sparkles in the dew.

Intellectual cultivation opens to woman an unfailing and inexhaustible resource in books, in the boundless treasures of literature and science, when ill health or domestic cares shut her up from the pleasures of general society. When storm and winter are raging without she can gather around her a more select society than any that ever graced a nation or an age. She may hold converse with the hoary forms of Old Philosophy. The historian lays upon her his spell of power, and while her senses fall asleep to all surrounding objects, she finds herself standing at his side in the streets of Thebes, or Rome, or Athens; she enters the Capitol or the Senate house, and hears the thunders of Cicero, or the rage of Cataline. She sees the

victorious generals of the Republic returning in proud procession from distant lands, leading captive the kings, and laden with the spoils of conquered nations. She sees her terrible armies march forth from her gates, Valor in their front, and Victory upon their banners, bearing war and subjugation to nations still more remote. Or at a later, happier time, when War had sheathed his sword, and the temple of Janus was shut, when the mute sentinel was keeping watch upon the borders of civilization, from some lofty tower of the Imperial City, she looks out upon a slumbering world on that night when the angels sung in Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will among men." There is the traveller, ready to transport her to any quarter of the globe which she chooses to visit. With him she may traverse the sandy deserts of Africa, or plunge with the adventurous ship among the eternal ice of either pole. With him she may stand upon the snowy top of Chimborazo or Mont Blanc, or explore the flaming mines of Poland or Peru. With him she may sit and muse among the ruins of Petra, or frighten the bittern from the marshy streets of Babylon the Great.



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By his assistance she may gain almost as clear an idea of the Holy Land, as if she had actually visited that consecrated soil,

“O’er whose acres walked those blessed feet,  
Which eighteen hundred years ago were nailed  
For our advantage to the bitter cross.”

The poet is there to wrap her in visions of still greater beauty and splendor. It is his to create a world such as meets the longings of the immortal mind, out of whatever is most perfect in this, and people it with beings of more than mortal loveliness and virtue. No sooner does she open the page of Milton, than she glides through the mystic lapse of ages, like Uriel upon the sun beam, and alights amid the silver streams, the cooling shades, the ambrosial airs of Paradise. In its sunny skies, its perpetual bloom, its undisturbed repose, she sees what this world might be, were it not marred, and clouded and blighted by sin.

Shakspeare, if possible, touches her with a wand of still more potent enchantment. He has but to speak, and spirits hover round, filling the air with spicy odors and melting

melodies. He stamps, and the yawning earth pours forth her withered witches and her gibbering ghosts. He smites upon the tomb of ages, and buried monarchs start to life, and followed by their trains, come forth to show us what they were, and tell us how they lived. By his master key are laid open, one after another, the most secret recesses of the human heart, and she sees the very springs which set in motion the vast machinery of human affairs. She sees in their elementary workings those grand passions which have filled the world with action, and history with the brightest virtues and the blackest crimes.

A woman, whom a good education has provided with such resources, can never feel the oppression of an idle or a solitary hour. Her house will probably be the resort of the cultivated and refined, and she will thus have all that is most valuable in society, without its vanities and its toils. In such a home, so fitted and formed to develope mind, she needs have no anxiety for the education of her children. Her conversation, and that of the friends whose intimacy she cultivates, will do more to educate them, to give them intellectual tastes and habits than a thousand schools

and colleges. For after all, the best part of education is not the dry knowledge obtained from books, and maps, and diagrams, but is imparted when teaching and being taught is farthest from our minds. It is breathed into us by the subtle infection of pure aims and lofty aspirations. It is imparted by the electric communication of right feelings and noble sentiments. No where can the mind gain knowledge so rapidly and so well, as in listening to the conversation of the accomplished and well informed. In no way can its powers be disciplined to strength and acuteness so well as by discussion of the most interesting subjects of human inquiry with a strong and clear intellect, which has already given them a thorough investigation.

The best part of education must be received at home, the education of the heart, by the influence of a sympathy with those we love, too delicate to be analyzed or defined. There we daily look into the souls of those whom nature has taught us most to reverence and imitate. If there we see, as in a pure mirror the images of the noblest virtues, integrity, truth, honor, justice, piety to God and kindness to men, we are more likely to be trans-

formed into the same likeness than by any amount of eloquence or ingenuity.

The best part of education is that which forms the character and gives us just views of human life,—that we are not sent here eagerly to grasp at and tenaciously to retain all the advantages over our fellow beings that we can gain, to take our ease while others toil, to seek our own selfish ends regardless of the rights and feelings of others; but with disinterestedness, firmness, patience, and humanity to take our share in the good or ill of all. It should ever be our motto,

“Trust no future howe’er pleasant,  
Let the dead past bury its dead,  
Act, act in the living present,  
Heart within and God o’er head.”



## LECTURE VI.

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### THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.



AT THE risk of appearing to descend from the weighty to the trivial, and from the sentimental to the common place, I shall address you in the present lecture on the subject of the preservation of health. In my judgment, this is a matter not only of great personal interest, but one which deserves to rank among the duties of woman. The weaker and frailer constitution of woman, renders her more liable to the loss of health than the stronger sex, and the loss of health entails upon her evils, which none but those who have suffered that misfortune can enumerate or describe.

An invalid of either sex cannot be either eminently useful or happy, and woman's conscientious and sensitive nature makes her especially uncomfortable under a sense of failure in duty, or the want of that buoyancy of animal spirits which is consequent upon impaired or feeble health. It is almost impossible to overestimate the difference in enjoyment or efficiency between a robust or infirm state of the physical system. God intended, doubtless, that man should share the pleasures of mere physical existence with those inferior creatures, upon which he has conferred only an animal nature. Their prevailing tranquillity and occasional exhilaration, demonstrate that to them mere physical existence is happiness, and their almost uniform health shows us to our shame, how much better they care for themselves by the promptings of blind instinct alone, than we do with all our boasted superiority of reason.

American women have peculiar need of admonition upon the subject of health. Foreigners tell us, and our own countrymen returning from abroad, that when they first land in one of our cities, the whole population, and the women especially, appear like a nation of invalids. Thin, pale and care-worn, the whole

people seem to glide about like bloodless spectres, just rising from the prostration of a universal pestilence, and in continual dread of the recurrence of another similar calamity. Beauty, they acknowledge they every where meet, of the most delicate and intellectual cast, but frail and transient as the bloom of spring. In Europe the grace of youth is succeeded by the full development of mature womanhood, hardly less pleasing and attractive. Instances of early decay are rare. Here, the instances are uncommon of any such luxuriant summer of existence, and multitudes find an untimely grave without ever knowing the blessing of physical strength and energy.

In all temperate climates, there ought to be no symptoms of decline before middle life, but here not a few do we see pass the meridian before five and twenty, and from mere exhaustion, suppose themselves in a few years more, wholly unfitted for the pleasures of society. Such a state of things is certainly unnatural, and ought not so to be. What are its causes, and what are the remedies, if there be any?

The evil commences at a very early period, and the blame lies partly at the door of a

previous generation. The foundation is often laid in early childhood, of life-long disease, discomfort and weakness, by thoughtless parental indulgence. While the constitution is yet tender and unconfirmed, simplicity of diet is of the last importance. Indeed it is almost the sole condition of health and comfort. But what do we see? Parents so infatuated as to make the reward of extraordinary merit to be the privilege of indulging in the most pernicious articles of food. It is made a point of etiquette, to give the little victims, when they are too young to take care of themselves, and are strayed away from home, the greatest quantity and variety of sweetmeats, such as full grown people would refuse, from their apprehension of making themselves sick. At home, they sit at tables loaded with every kind of luxury, and are permitted to eat freely of all.

The necessary and inevitable consequence of this is, that the digestive organs early become disordered, enfeebled, diseased, and when this takes place while the constitution is forming, there is scarcely any thing more incurable. Those organs are the fountain of life, and when preserved in perfect health, they give



a full and perfect development to the whole system. The animal spirits continually overflow in mirth and gladness, the temper is serene, the mind capable of continued application, and the affections seem to embrace their natural objects with a greater warmth and tenacity. The child which is properly cared for, seems to belong to God's joyous creation. The glad tones of a group of such children, resemble the song of birds, which ushers in the morning, and proclaims the goodness of the Creator by a spontaneous, though irrational hymn of praise. If you see, as you often do among them, the pale, the sickly, the feeble and the sad, you may in nine cases out of ten, set it down to bad domestic management, a reckless imprudence in diet or hours of rest.

Boys, whose first years are spent for the most part in the open air, overcome in some degree these unfavorable influences, but girls who are shut up at home for more than half the year, are greater sufferers.

To these years of unpropitious domestic influences, succeed those of school life. Six hours are passed each day in a close room, in which there is but imperfect ventilation, and

in which the vital properties of the atmosphere, in the space of half an hour, are almost wholly destroyed. There they sit, usually in the most uncomfortable positions, on seats without backs, or bending over their tasks in such an attitude as to embarrass, if not arrest, the vital functions. All this takes place while the system is receiving its final and most important development. And is it any wonder, that the daughters of this land, especially those who live in cities where most of the families of the more opulent classes are educated, come from school the frailest of human beings, intellectually cultivated perhaps, accomplished if you please, but physically incompetent to endure the exposures, the labors, the cares and trials, which every human being must inevitably pass through.

After leaving school, the first ordeal to which the young woman is subjected, is the senseless tyranny of fashion in dress, late hours and unseasonable entertainments. Custom, perhaps, has commenced its despotism years farther back, in condemning the person to be reduced to nearly the proportions of an insect, by tight lacing, by which the natural play of all the vital organs is rendered

physically impossible. The lungs, the heart, and the digestive organs, can no more act their part than the feet when bound in fetters.

There is in most young women, on coming out, as it is called, a strong disposition to run into excess. Deliverance from school discipline and from domestic restraint, is to them, for a while, a continual jubilee. Scenes of gaiety and pleasure have the charm of novelty. The mind and heart are then most susceptible of their fascination, and not one young woman in a hundred has ever reflected upon the laws of health, which are just as inflexible and inexorable as the ebbing and flowing of the sea. It never occurs to them, that God has given to mankind the day for labor and the night for repose, that the time taken from the usual hours of slumber and devoted to exciting amusement, necessarily makes an inroad upon the health, let it be spent never so agreeably. No indemnification the next morning, can obviate the penalty of attempting to alter the law of nature, and to change night into day and day into night. It does not occur to the young and the thoughtless, that all such excesses are violations of the conditions of health, which are written down

in the book of retribution, and must be answered, sooner or later, in diminished strength and impaired power of enjoyment.

Gaiety is usually reserved for the winter, as if on purpose to render it the more dangerous, because then there is the greatest difference between the temperature of the internal and external atmosphere. Wholly overlooking the season of the year, the despotism of fashion compels the most delicate female to dress for a party of pleasure as lightly as if it were midsummer, and makes her willing to endure the martyrdom of a night of exposure to the chilling blasts of January, as poorly defended against the weather, as if it were amidst the blazing heats of July. As if to fill up the measure of imprudence, at a late hour at night, or latterly an early hour in the morning, the festivity is interrupted or closed with a sumptuous entertainment, made up almost exclusively of the most unwholesome articles of food. The taking of food at unseasonable hours, is at all times almost an unpardonable sin against the laws of health. Most of all is it so in the middle of the night, a time when the system is usually wholly at rest. Nature feels herself outraged,

and soon begins to manifest her displeasure, by giving some note of alarm. Color forsakes the cheeks, the lips become livid or white or parched. The rotundity of full maturity begins to subside. Lassitude succeeds, then the loss of a serene and equable temper, then despondency, and a disgust for the very scenes of pleasure which have been lately sought so eagerly. Two or three seasons are too often enough to exhaust the energies of a system which had never been robust, and the young woman finds herself in a measure superannuated on the very threshold of existence.

There is one point of vital importance, upon which the mandates of fashion and the laws of health are directly at issue, and that is the protection of the feet. Achilles is fabled in the Grecian mythology to have been made invulnerable by being dipped by his mother in the Styx. One part only was left accessible to the wounds of death, the heel by which she held him. One might almost imagine that this fable was intended to warn mankind that death most often works its way into the human system by finding the feet wholly exposed. For six months of the year, the earth is always either cold or wet, and

often both. That cold and dampness are most pernicious to the human frame. Those who walk or stand upon the cold, wet earth, with their feet insufficiently protected, stand or walk over their own graves. That chill and dampness invade the vital powers with a more mortal assault than they sustain from any other quarter. They search the whole system, and if there is any where a predisposition to disease they develope and mature it. The usual defence which women provide against the assaults of this most dangerous of their foes, is wholly insufficient, and they are reduced to the necessity, as they suppose, of not going abroad at all, or of running a perpetual risk of colds, fever and consumption, in short every malady that flesh is heir to, which is consequent upon imprudent exposure. A sacrifice is to be made, either of health, or of what they believe to be comeliness and grace, and nine out of ten are willing to embrace the former alternative. Is it any wonder that so large a proportion of American women are on the list of invalids, that our weekly bills of mortality are swelled by multitudes of the young and beautiful, whom their parents have watched over, and

educated and accomplished, as they hoped, to be the solace of their declining years?

There is a sad history about every one of these cases, which it would be profitable to have generally known. I myself have seen so many that I find no difficulty in imagining them all. The daughter grows up amid every indulgence which can be lavished upon her by parental affection. No sacrifice is too great to be made for her education and accomplishment. The time arrives when she is to take her place in society. From that moment, be she wise or foolish, rich or poor, feeble or strong, she is surrendered over to the dominion of a code of laws, more minute, more arbitrary, more exacting, than those of any other tyranny that ever existed upon earth. They are administered by a class of persons, generally, whose judgments no one values, and whose characters no one respects, yet who, by their position, connexions and exclusive devotion to society, reign absolute in a certain sphere of life.

The young woman is taught to believe that her whole success in life depends upon her standing well with this clique of empty, brainless and heartless usurpers. She must go

with the mass, she must not lag behind, but rather go before the multitude in adopting the most fantastic mode of the day, no matter at what sacrifice of health and comfort. The whole round of gaiety must be followed up. Night after night, week after week, she must go through storm and wind and rain, she must alternately breathe the hot, dead and mephitic atmosphere of theatres and ball rooms, and the biting external air at a temperature perhaps scarcely above zero.

In a majority of cases the health, sooner or later, begins to suffer. If the signal, which nature gives of intolerable abuse, were at once regarded, there would be a chance of escape from impending danger. But there is generally a want of frankness in telling the worst. Suffering is endured in silence, and the most unfavorable symptoms are suppressed. Entire frankness would bring to a close the giddy whirl of daily excitement, which habit has begun to make necessary to the flow of animal spirits, and shut up at home that curiosity which finds its food in the incidents and gossip of fashionable society, or, perhaps, subject the victim of imprudence to medical treatment, so justly revolting to the youthful imagination.



But the time at length arrives when concealment is no longer practicable; the cough, or the flushed cheek, or the decaying appetite, or the dull and faded eye, awakens the alarm of parental watchfulness, and a physician is called in, and here opens the first sad scene of the life of an invalid.

In a large proportion of instances, the mischief is found to have proceeded too far to admit of a speedy and effectual remedy. And what is worse than all, the physician too often finds that there is no strength or stamina of constitution to react under his remedies, or to bear any active treatment. What vigor there is left, sinks under the means which he deems necessary for the eradication of disease, and the very weakness which induced the accession of the malady, is found equally unable to resist the derangement produced by medical treatment. Medical skill can only assist nature. Medicines have no creative or healing power. They only arouse or direct the natural functions of the human system. But if there is no nature to assist, they often aggravate the very evils they are intended to cure. And this is the worst evil with which the physician has to contend. It

drives him to act merely on the defensive, and adopt a system of palliatives, instead of attempting a radical cure.

The day that makes a person a decided invalid, is, next to death, the greatest misfortune. The necessity of forbearing air and exercise, is itself enough to reduce the most robust constitution to a state of weakness, despondency and decline. The mind suffers no less than the body. If it is salutary to the body to move abroad and breathe the pure air of heaven, so it is no less refreshing to the mind to look upon the blue arch of heaven, the rich green of the fields, the mantling foliage of the forest, the calm or sparkling beauty of the running stream, or meditate upon the shore of the far rolling ocean. The health is really affected by the power of witnessing with our own eyes what is going on in the world, and forgetting our own feelings while listening to the affairs, the sufferings or enjoyments of others. Hence it is much easier to preserve health while we have it, than to recover it when it is lost. In health, the mind and body act and react upon each other only for good, in sickness only for evil.

This leads me to speak of the moral causes which affect the health of woman. A state of high intellectual culture and social refinement, is unfavorable to physical health; at least as education is at present conducted. Besides the years of youth that must be consumed in study, which too often amounts to a species of imprisonment, refinement is only another name for the cultivation of the sensibilities. Those cultivated sensibilities, while they render us capable of a higher order and a greater variety of enjoyment, likewise expose us proportionably to more multiplied and intenser sufferings. It is impossible to cultivate the taste without rendering us more liable to annoyance. The rude collisions of society, create a greater disturbance of feeling, as the sense of propriety becomes more distinct and imperative. Woman is very dependent for her daily comfort on the consideration and forbearance of those with whom her lot is cast. Her natural sensibility renders her liable to many grievances which make no lasting impression upon the rougher sex. It has been said, that her life is a series of suppressed emotions. How few women there are who are situated precisely to their minds, and how little power

has any woman to change or obviate the causes of her annoyance! Emotion too often becomes a pent up fire, the more consuming from the impossibility of revealing the causes of distress. Bereavement, loss of fortune, unkindness of connexions, are liable at any moment to inflict an incurable wound upon the peace of the possessor of the most affluent and happy lot.

Of all human beings, a woman has the most need of robust health, and that firmness of nerves which is usually its consequence, to meet and overcome the troubles which she may be called on at any moment to encounter. If there is not this constitutional strength, built up and preserved by systematic discipline, almost any misfortune may involve another, scarcely less than the greatest, the loss of health. Where moral causes are at work, which are out of the reach of the physician to remedy, or perhaps to detect, it is in vain that medical aid is called in. The physician that is needed is one which can

“Minister to a mind diseased,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain.”

Much of the pity which is expressed by what are called the higher classes, for the sorrows of the lower, is thrown away. They suffer quite as great troubles themselves, which their morbid sensibilities, and enfeebled constitutions, make them less able to bear. Perpetual toil never suffers the nerves of the laborious to become unstrung. As soon as they lay their heads on their pillows, overpowering weariness steeps them in sweet oblivion of their woes, while the sorrow-stricken daughter of luxury and abundance watches till the morning star, or tosses on a fiery sea of troubles. Thus it is, that gaiety and grief, are alike the enemies of woman's health.

But we will suppose the young woman to have escaped with her life from the dangers to which she has been exposed by the confinement of school and the follies of what is called society; the next sphere she enters is that of the wife and mother. Here the necessity of firm health is felt with tenfold force. While a woman is a single member of a family, the daughter or the sister, the social discomfort of ill health, or even the sorrow of premature death, is less extensively

felt. There is the unhappiness of perpetual anxiety, a constant drawback upon that cheerfulness and hilarity which ought to animate every fireside; there is watching and nursing, and a heavy draught continually made upon the affections and the sympathies. The order and organization of the family is disturbed, if not broken up.

But the position of the wife and mother is wholly different. If she is disabled, every thing goes wrong. Health and energy, and the power of unwearied supervision, are to her indispensable. Her happiness, the prosperity of her husband and family, depend upon it. With most young people, the possibility of entering upon the married state at all, of gratifying those strong affections which draw the sexes together, of consummating those long cherished attachments which spring up between congenial minds, depends upon their ability to live on small means. And one of the saddest consequences which is seen to follow every advance of luxury and extravagance, is the increasing number of the excellent and cultivated of both sexes, whom the arbitrary and tyrannous standard, which senseless custom sets up of what constitutes

a necessary outfit in life, and the expected scale of expenditure afterward, have condemned to a single life. This arbitrary despotism alone, in the length and breadth of its operation, almost equalizes all conditions, and counterbalances the advantages possessed by what are called the higher classes of society. In the humbler ranks, the affections are set free, no stern mandate of pride or ambition comes in to chill or freeze their current, or sever and disappoint them for ever. There is no waiting till the bloom of life is passed, and the sensibilities are deadened by unreasonable delays. There is no consuming war between taste and condition, none of that moral cowardice, which would sacrifice every thing that is most precious in life, to the fantastic fear of losing caste.

The demands which are made on the energy, the industry, the vigilance and the endurance of the wife and mother, are incessant and increasing. I mean the woman of conscience and principle. There are wives and mothers, I allow, who are troubled by none of these things, who seek their own ease and pleasure at any sacrifice; who give their children up, as soon as they are born,

to the care of nurses and servants, with as little compunction as the ostrich abandons her offspring to the sands and storms of the desert. Such instances, however, of the total want of the natural affections, it is to be hoped, are rare. The pleadings of a mother's heart are generally too strong for the suggestions of indolence or the cravings of vanity. Utter helplessness makes an appeal that cannot be resisted, and mute suffering and tears awaken an irresistible compassion. The care of children involves the frequent loss of rest and sleep, and these are the severest draughts upon the constitution.

Besides, most mothers are early mourners. Nearly one half of the children that are born, are buried before five years of age. Is this the order of nature? Was this the intention of Providence? Is man, as an animal, worse constituted than other and inferior races? Nothing of the kind takes place in any other species of the animal kingdom. It is well worthy of consideration, if this appalling mortality be not the consequence of perverted and artificial habits of life, by which, in the course of generations, the race itself has deteriorated. The human being is subjected to



all the laws of animal organization. Every species of animals can be improved by care and science, and successive generations be made to approximate more and more near to the perfect type of their kind. If they can be improved, they can likewise be suffered to degenerate. Cannot the human race degenerate by the same want of care?

There is, however, this difference between the two cases. The animals are passive under the management of man. Their habits are simple and their appetites instinctive. Hurtful luxury is to them unknown. In training them to physical perfection, man meets with few obstacles. With the human being, the case is entirely different. Physical perfection must cost personal self denial, and if it be at all hereditary, the moral force and principle must be hereditary too, which is necessary to maintain the integrity of nature.

Where is one generation, even, to be found, who are willing to submit to that care and self denial, which are the price that must be paid for physical health and perfection? What are all the achievements of civilization, but a continual war upon the simplicity of nature? Wealth accumulates, and what is to be done

with it? Much of it will ordinarily go for the purchase of luxuries. And what are luxuries? The greatest enemies to health. Daily temptations to the overindulgence of the appetites. Is the rich man, whose cellars are filled with the choicest wines, and whose means can command every day the rarest delicacies of the market, to be expected to live as simply as the poor man; will he suffer his wines to ripen for another generation, and confine himself to a few simple articles of food? What is the use then of being rich? Will a lady, who has servants enough and to spare, be found willing to do their work for the sake of taking exercise? Will the lady, who keeps a carriage, walk for the sake of breathing the external air? Will her household, who have nothing in the world to do, be up with the dawn, to drink in vitality from the freshness of morning? Self-indulgence will follow the enjoyment of ample means, and self-indulgence must pay the penalty of an enfeebled constitution. The evil of this would not be so great, if the bad consequences were confined to the individual, and did not descend to the next generation. But such is nature's law, that the constitution

is in some measure transmitted to the offspring, and those who adopt an enervating course of life are chargeable with the miseries they entail upon those who come after them.

To the tender mother and conscientious Christian, it must be a matter of abiding sorrow, if she has even the suspicion that the lives of these who are dear to her, have been in any degree shortened by her own want of care, her own neglect to secure in early life a firm and vigorous constitution, or at least to use her utmost endeavors to do so.

Oh what a difference in a mother's happiness between the daily sight of a healthful or a sickly child! A blooming, vigorous child, is one of the most beautiful, gladdening objects that the human eye rests upon, especially if it be our own. Its gaiety is contagious, its glee and merriment almost make our hearts feel again the warm current of youthful blood. We learn with it to enjoy the world afresh. We sympathize with the delight with which the young gaze upon a world to them in its prime. The flowers look more beautiful when we see them looking upon them with ecstasy, and scenes and prospects which have long become tame and indifferent to us smile

out once more, when we see them again through young eyes and buoyant spirits.

There is no brighter emblem of hope than a vigorous, well developed child. For it we anticipate all the possible enjoyments of this life. It possesses that which is the condition of all satisfaction in any thing, a strong physical constitution. The abounding goodness of the Creator has provided ample stores of happiness for every period of human life, from infancy to extreme old age, if we are but true to ourselves, and obedient to the physical as well as the moral laws of our nature.

Education and enjoyment commence together, and are intended to go hand in hand, till the soul, having accomplished the purposes of its earthly discipline, is prepared for a higher scene, and to enter upon a new career of progress and improvement. As long as the first of blessings, health, is preserved, the exercise of the senses is an unceasing source of delight. Every morning and every evening is a spectacle of grandeur and beauty, which art cannot imitate, and beyond which imagination cannot go. But to receive the grateful cheering which morning brings, it is necessary that the physical system should be in health.

The hum of business, the excitement of action, are calculated to heighten the pleasures of existence, but there must be firmness of nerve to make activity enjoyment. When the strength is sunk far below its natural level, the busy whirl of life passes over to a source of pain and annoyance. There is something soothing and tranquillizing in the approach of evening, but a slight depression of the animal spirits, transforms tranquillity to sadness.

All the impulses of nature are intended by God, as they strike upon the senses, to elicit the most delicious music. But then the harp must be in tune. If its chords are unstrung by ill health, the same external impulses grate harsh discord.

To the sickly child then, what a different prospect does life present! It wants the first and most indispensable condition of happiness. In it the idea of duty may be early developed, and those moral pleasures which spring from the discharge of duty, will be accessible; and some of the brightest ornaments of human nature have been persons debarred by ill health from almost all physical enjoyment. And some of the most successful in the va-

rious walks of business and literature have been men who have labored and thought and studied merely to divert their consciousness from their own sufferings, and who would gladly have laid down, at any hour, the burden of life.

But is there any mother who can bear the thought of her own offspring entering upon such a life, and accomplishing such a destiny of martyrdom? If her maternal tenderness revolts at the thought, let her beware how she trifles with her own health, or by neglect or imprudence, produces in herself a feebleness which may be hereditary.

The saddest picture of all, and one which ought to be held up to the mental eye of every young woman, till she trains herself to a discreet and scrupulous care of her health, is a young mother passing away to the tomb before middle life, leaving her children to the tenderness or the neglect of she knows not whom. A house left desolate by the death of a young mother, is one of the most melancholy places which is ever visited by a thoughtful mind. It is as if a star had fallen from its sphere, and gone out in utter darkness.

To whom could life itself be more valuable, interesting or happy for its own sake? In the very relation of wife, entered upon at that period when the susceptibilities of enjoyment were greatest, and the world had not lost the freshness of its early promise, there is enough to make existence most precious. The well remembered days of youth have not yet receded so far into the distance, as to have lost their power to soothe and refresh the mind. The present is filled with duty and enterprise and action. To her life is not a bare thread, connecting day with day and hour with hour in tasteless monotony. It is strung thick with the pearls of domestic, quiet duties, and here and there with the precious diamond of a noble deed. Who, like the mother, can fill the future with bright and budding hopes? Every child which plays at her side, or reposes on her bosom, is an heir of God's world, has an inheritance among the bounties of his providence, a sphere of honor and happiness to fill.

And has not the young mother reasons above all others for desiring life? Shall she not wish to see, as well as anticipate the development and maturity of her children?

Yet how many there are before whose declining strength, all those bright visions fade away, who are destined to feel first the alarming possibility, then the fatal certainty, that in a few months or years, they must abandon the most interesting and responsible position that a human being can occupy! The tender tie of mother and children must be severed when it is strongest, and most especially the source of interest and satisfaction. Her guardianship is to be withdrawn at the very moment when they need it the most. A mother's instinctive affection is the only sure pledge of fidelity in the training of the young. Nothing else can prompt the exertion, nothing else can secure the patience; nothing else can keep alive that perpetual watchfulness which is indispensable to the welfare and safety of the thoughtless, the inexperienced, the tempted.

But the mother and the children are not the only ones that suffer. There is another, to whom this bereavement may be worse than death, the husband and the father. His whole happiness has been risked upon a single stake, and is suspended upon the frail life of one human being. All his plans, all his



prospects; all his hopes have centred in her. Her presence has been the invisible charm which has shed light and beauty on all things. For her sake labor has been light, and enterprise joyful. Her sympathy has soothed him in every trial, and her hearty and disinterested counsels have often, like a kind of inspiration, guided him in his dark and doubtful way. Life itself has been more than doubled in interest through sympathy with keener perceptions and livelier sensibilities. When she is gone, half of him is dead, and he lives on only a broken and mutilated existence. The best, most beautiful and precious part of every thing has perished with her. He may form new connexions, but the chances of happiness are almost infinitely diminished. It requires a degree of wisdom, forbearance and principle, not often to be found, to make the place of step-mother any thing but the source of misery, discord and estrangement.

From all these considerations it follows, that there is scarce any place on earth so full of anxious forebodings, as the sick room of a young mother.

I have drawn these various pictures in dark colors, not darker however than the reality,

that I may impress the mind of some young woman with the importance of taking care of her health before it is too late. I am not sanguine of the least measure of success. I know the power of fashion, I know the recklessness and the thoughtlessness of that age which I address. I know with what unconcern the greatest blessings are sacrificed to a little present gratification. I know the sensitiveness to ridicule, which drives the young into the most inexcusable imprudence. I ask them to pause and consider, if any thing can compensate the loss of health, if any situation can be imagined in which impaired health is not a bar to all enjoyment. That desire to please, which is the source of half woman's virtues, as well as most of her errors, must lead her to desire to prolong her beauty, if she have it, or the only substitute that can possibly take its place, good health. The comeliest of things is a beautiful woman, and no woman ever yet believed that she was destitute of all the charms which are peculiar to her sex. If she have but few, then is there the more reason for preserving them from decay.

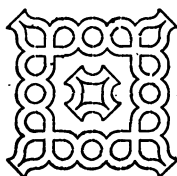
If she would preserve her health, let her

learn its unchangeable laws, and govern herself by a few simple, intelligible rules.

No person can feel well, and enjoy a flow of animal spirits, for any considerable time, without daily exercise in the open air. No woman can preserve her bloom, if she indulge in late and irregular hours of amusement and rest. No woman can long bear up against the abuse of indulging a capricious appetite, and substituting, at all hours of the night and the day, sweetmeats for simple and ordinary food. Women will be invalids so long as they continue to expose their persons in all weathers to the access of cold and dampness. Women will continue to die in early or middle life, or drag out a miserable existence, so long as the ambition of being excessively genteel, shall induce them to clothe their feet so miserably as to court, rather than shun, the approach of colds, fevers and consumptions. American women will continue to fade early, so long as they neglect the subject of health altogether, and surrender to mere accident one of the most important interests of life.

Finally, let every woman provide herself with some useful, dignified, interesting em-

ployment. By an idle, useless life, the physical energies are as much impaired as the temper and the faculties of the mind. Idleness must end in despondency and depression. There is nothing so sustaining to the whole being, corporeal and mental, as the consciousness of duty, the feeling that life is not a mere waste, accomplishing nothing, tending to nothing. Nothing contributes so much to that calmness and self-possession, which is itself a fountain of health to the animal economy, as the well grounded expectation of a happy immortality.



## LECTURE VII.

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### THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.



**A**FTER such ample disquisition concerning the duties of woman, those whom I address may now wish to hear something concerning her rights. Accordingly the subject of the present lecture will be the social and political rights of woman.

On this subject it is easy to perceive, that it will be impossible to enter into any abstract argument derived from any supposed equality or inequality of the sexes, as regards mental or moral endowment. Certain it is, that God designed them for spheres of action entirely different. Those spheres are pointed out and ascertained by nature

and experience. Each fell into the sphere for which it was designed, and not by social compact, but by the indications of nature and the constraint of necessity.

The position of woman is a question of expediency, not of abstract, original right. The first dictate of natural justice would seem to be, that the natural rights of man and woman should be equal. But this assertion must be received with considerable modification. So it is with the fundamental proposition in the declaration of rights in the constitution of our country; "All men are born free and equal." Still this equality is made a subject of restriction, for no one becomes a citizen in the fullest sense, no one has the right of suffrage until he has reached the age of twenty-one. All men are not equal in the eye of these very laws, which are made under that constitution whose fundamental article declares them to be. So, after all, under the freest constitution, political rights are determined by expediency. Woman has a right to precisely that position which is most conducive to the welfare of that community to which she belongs, and that position will be most conducive to her own happiness.

In ascertaining that position, we have to guide us, the experience of the world for the six thousand years of its recorded existence, we have the spectacle of the various nations of the earth at the present hour. We have before us every possible variety of experiment and the result of each, from the condition of Asia, where woman, from time immemorial, has been little better than a slave, to our own Republic, in which she has been elevated to the nearest practicable degree of civil and social equality.

From all those sources of information we gather, that woman has a right to claim, or it is expedient that she should enjoy, education, personal liberty, equal rights of marriage, and the equal distribution and security of property. By the enjoyment of these rights, woman is placed in her appropriate sphere, and then she contributes her full share to the happiness, the virtue, the security, the welfare of the race. When deprived of any of them, the injustice is more than avenged by the degradation and wretchedness, which that very injustice is sure to occasion to every member of society.

Woman has a right to an equality with

man in the fundamental relation of marriage. It is for the interest and the happiness of both parties that it should be so. The best security for the reality and genuineness of those affections which ought to unite husband and wife, is the freedom of their choice, and the equality of the contracting parties. Freedom and equality give the greatest tenderness and delicacy to the domestic affections. Those affections, when left free, tend to ennoble both before the formation of the marriage tie. That which is voluntary will be compassed by other attractions than personal charms, and a return of affection will be sought, not only by assiduity, but by merit. Here then there is an exalting influence exerted upon both sexes from early life, by the very prospect of a negotiation in which character will inevitably be taken into account. And nothing, perhaps, besides religious motives, exercises a more decisive influence over both sexes in the forming period of life.

In countries where woman is a mere slave, is sought without affection, and is given away from sordid interest, no such influence is exerted. Character has nothing to do with the transaction, and therefore character is not



affected by it for good. A relation entered into without affection, and unaccompanied by esteem, exerts no ennobling influence upon either party; and beginning neither in affection nor esteem, it will prompt to no cultivation of either tenderness or merit, by which that affection and esteem might be perpetuated and secured.

Such would be the fact in countries where the rights of marriage were equal, and every man compelled to restrict himself to one wife, as well as every woman to one husband. But throughout Asia, and the barbarous parts of the rest of the world, the social wrong is permitted of suffering a man to have more wives than one. This completes the degradation, first of woman, then, through her, of the whole texture of society, and lays the foundation for coarseness of manners, corruption of morals, injustice in the laws, despotism in government, and a total paralysis of enterprise, industry and improvement. In such a state of things, to use the language of a sacred writer, "The foundations of the world are out of joint." Polygamy, at this moment, is the grand incubus of the whole continent of Asia. It puts an effectual bar to all social progress

and political reform. As long as it exists, men will be tyrants, and women will be slaves. The sin is immediately visited upon all, for the women have the most important part of education in their own hands, and they mould each rising generation. Ignorant, and without moral education themselves, they are precisely fitted to train up each rising generation to a moral fitness to inherit the vices and degradation of their ancestors.

It is a remarkable fact, that the Bible, originating as it did in Asia, in its first pages records its protest against this stupendous abuse. It celebrates the first nuptials between one man and one woman. It represents one man and one woman only to have been first created, thus making the law of revelation coincide with the law of nature, since the equality of the sexes is kept up in the births of children among all nations. Polygamy, though discouraged by the spirit of the Mosaic institutions, was too firmly established in the East to be rooted out, even among the chosen people of God.

What Moses pointed out as the law of nature, Christ enacted into a positive law of Christianity, and thus laid the foundation of

the improved condition of woman, and through her, of the whole structure of society in modern times. This one principle alone is almost enough to stamp permanency and universality upon the Christian religion, from its immeasurable influence upon the moral and physical condition of the human race. The permission of polygamy, and the low estimate placed by Mohammedanism upon woman, is enough to disprove its divine original, and forbid its becoming the religion of the world. Society can never be in a sound or flourishing condition, where such principles are held, and such practices permitted. Mohammedanism was a religion of conquest; it subsisted and grew upon its prey. As soon as that prey is exhausted, it will die out. Where women are slaves, men will never be any thing more than sensualists and barbarians. Christianity, on the other hand, being based, in this respect, on the principles of human nature, and of natural justice, has in itself the elements of perpetual growth, unlimited development, and indefinite duration.

The Christian idea of the equality of woman met with a powerful auxiliary in the sentiments of the northern nations of Europe, in the Mid-

dle Ages. In the East it had prejudices to combat, which had existed from time immemorial, and were not distinguished from the institutions of nature. In Greece there was less of the oriental despotism, though there women were always secluded, and led a life of inferiority and subjection. In Italy, women enjoyed a happier lot. That practical people early perceived the loss of moral power which a community suffers, that condemns one half the species to ignorance and degradation. Their wiser indulgence was amply repaid in the succession of able statesmen and warriors their nation had produced, whose characters were mainly formed by the influence of gifted and educated women belonging to the most distinguished families.

The northern nations carried these ideas still further. With them reverence for woman became a superstition, and it was supposed that she enjoyed miraculous communications of prudence in affairs and knowledge of futurity. When Christianity came among them with its doctrine of the spiritual equality of woman, these barbarians received it as confirmation of their previous veneration for the weaker sex. Hence the romantic extravagances of the in-

stitution of chivalry. The absurdities of that system were the result of a good thing carried to excess.

As the mists of ignorance cleared away in the returning civilization of modern times, those extravagances disappeared, and left the sentiment of reverence for woman without its abuse. And this sentiment, at the present hour, may be justly regarded as the main cause of the political and moral preponderance of European nations and their descendants in the affairs of the world.

In the United States, this sentiment of reverence for woman has been made more practical and universal than in Europe itself. No where, by the confession of all observers, is she treated with so much respect. No where has she so much freedom, and no where has she shown so little disposition to abuse it. She has only then to preserve what she has obtained. The best way for her to do this is, to ask for no more, to understand her sphere, and be contented to move in it in quietness and peace.

If she have the wisdom to do this, she will not listen to some of her sex, who, with much eloquence and plausibility, are endeavoring to

persuade her to assert her claim to the right of suffrage, the tenure of political office, and the exercise of the professions, of speaking in public assemblies, and mingling in all the strife of partisan struggles and philanthropic enterprises. If there be not in a woman enough of that instinctive delicacy, which is with her a species of inspiration, to prevent her from mingling in such scenes, there certainly ought to be enough to make her shrink back from its practical results, the public exhibition of those passions and emotions which are sure to unsex and degrade her. The secluded life which is marked out for woman by her constitution and peculiar duties, precludes her from the possibility of acquiring that breadth of information and practical knowledge of the working of civil institutions, which are necessary to a just judgment of public measures. Were every question to be decided by moral feeling, political affairs would be safer in the hands of the women than of the rougher sex. But the difficulty is, they feel too much and too acutely. They want measure and moderation, even in that which is good, and are liable to overlook the long distance which must ever intervene between the desirable and the possible.

Though denied in all countries the right of direct interference in political affairs, there is a sphere of indirect influence left open to woman, which ought to satisfy the most aspiring ambition, in her continual access to those who do govern, and her control over the opinions of each rising generation. Her real influence will be in proportion to the extent of her knowledge, and the degree of her mental culture.

There is a class of writers, against whom I feel it my duty, in this connexion, to put my countrywomen especially on their guard, those, I mean, who would plead the rights of woman against the rigors of the marriage tie. There are those, and among them females of no little talent and celebrity, who are endeavoring to make out the case, that the contract which binds husband and wife, the nearer it approaches indissolubility the more oppressive it becomes to the weaker sex. More liberty, it is claimed, ought to be allowed both parties to terminate a connexion which is found to be unsuitable, uncongenial or unharmonious. Those who cannot love each other ought to be separated. Some go so far as to say, that without mutual affection, the contract itself is

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null and void. It is in fact the tendency of a large class of writings of the present day to undermine the sacredness of marriage. Our country is flooded with books which teach the most shocking and demoralizing doctrines upon this subject.

If it were not attaching too much importance to writings which are so plainly profligate and detestable, I should be tempted to attribute to this cause the alarming increase which has taken place in this country in the number of divorces within a few years. In some of the states they are said to have increased, within half a century, sixteen hundred per cent. This has ever been considered as one of the most certain indications of the depraved condition of public morals. Such a thing as a divorce was not known in Rome for many centuries, and when they did commence, and especially when they became frequent, every thing verged rapidly to ruin. Husbands repudiated their wives, and wives divorced their husbands, with scarcely any restraint, till one of their satirists relates a case in which a woman changed her husband five times in eight years.

It is a remarkable and a significant fact, that



almost the whole of this class of the advocates of the rights of women are infidels, open unbelievers in the divine origin of Christianity, and many of them advocates of a new order of society, in which the natural distribution of mankind into families is to be overlooked. It is surprising that such women do not perceive, that the laws of marriage are enacted and devised for the especial protection of their own sex, which is the weaker party, in the contract. They are designed to devolve on both parents the care and labor of supporting and educating their common offspring. They are to secure to woman that aid which she requires, from the labors of the stronger sex in providing for a family. Any relaxation in the stringency of the laws which enforce the obligations of marriage is sure to operate to her disadvantage. All human laws have done nothing in this cause in comparison with Christianity. Marriage becomes sacred and indissoluble in precise proportion to the moral power which Christianity exercises over the hearts and consciences of mankind.

There is no point in which the giving up of Christianity so soon manifests itself as in a tendency to dissoluteness in the intercourse

of the sexes. The same phrensy which renounced all belief in a supernatural revelation in France, in the time of the revolution, proclaimed an almost unlimited license of divorce, and the domestic hearth and the public altars of religion were violated and desecrated together. One of the most appalling horrors of that awful crisis, was the dissolution of family ties, the separation of husbands and wives, who, up to that period, had lived together in harmony and peace; the scattering of children, who were first made spectators of their parents' quarrels, and then turned adrift to get their morals and their education from the mobs of Paris.

What was then done in a mad moment of political excitement, is now attempted to be accomplished by the more deliberate process of a profligate literature, scattered abroad with a profusion equalling the multitudinous leaves of autumn. This literature has for its object to bring into contempt the whole institution of marriage, to pollute all its holy associations, to represent those who have been entrapped into it, as the victims of an absurd prejudice, or an antiquated usage. The relation in general is represented as a state of discontent,

rather than enjoyment, and those who rebel against its restraints are rather to be commended for their moral courage in re-asserting the rights of women, than blamed for their hardihood in striking at the root of all that is most sacred in the human heart, and all that is most precious in social institutions.

It is not wonderful, perhaps, that such a literature should be tolerated in France, where the traces of the infidelity and radicalism of the last century are not yet worn out. But it is strange that it should cross the channel and find English translators and readers; still more strange, that it should meet a reception in the United States, where, thanks to the influence of Christianity, marriage is still held in honor. Our whole country is at this moment flooded with these leprous dregs of corruption. If a premium were proposed for the composition of the most efficient instrument of the defilement of a whole generation, nothing could be brought forward more exactly fitted for its purpose. The mother who commends, or even tolerates in her family, such licentious productions, deserves to see her daughters unhappy in their married life.

Woman has a right to education. By this I mean, that it is expedient for all parties that as much care and expense should be bestowed on the daughters as on the sons of a family. This, I am aware, is not the opinion or the practice which prevails in those parts of the world that are most civilized and most Christian. I shall attempt to give my reasons for thinking that the importance of giving women a thorough education is not sufficiently appreciated.

It is thought, because women do not exercise the learned professions, do not mingle in politics, do not transact public business, do not address assemblies, do not, as a general rule, employ their talents in authorship, that it is of minor importance whether or not their minds are stored with knowledge, whether their intellectual powers are disciplined by culture, whether they can transcend with credit to themselves, the most ordinary topics of conversation.

A part of mankind seem to think of woman as a mere doll, to be dressed up fantastically, and set up in the house as something to be looked at, or as a piece of automaton furniture, necessary to the completeness of a domestic

establishment. Others seem to regard their wives as ~~the~~ connecting link between themselves and society, to maintain the forms of daily intercourse, as a necessary instrument of success in business or ambition. Others make a wife nothing more or other than a domestic drudge, to manage and labor for the daily wants of a household, to care for their physical wants and comforts, to see that they are well fed and clothed and lodged.

Those who entertain such an estimate of the sphere and duties of woman, will, of course, consider her education as a matter of but very little importance. But, I ask if this be a worthy conception of one half the human species? It might answer for a Mahometan, who believes that women are created without souls, and are not made to be the companions of men here or hereafter. But such ideas ought not to be so much as named among Christians, who believe that all souls are equal in the sight of God.

Woman has a right to be educated for her own sake, because it adds to her resources within herself, and enlarges her means of happiness. Besides adding to the stores of positive knowledge, education disciplines and perfects

all the faculties, gives acuteness to the perceptions, delicacy to the sensibilities, accuracy to the power of observation, solidity to the judgment, and gives a woman weight, influence and respect with those with whom she associates. Literature is becoming one of the chief means of entertainment, indeed, almost the only source of amusement to those who are past middle life. The profit and delight of reading is nearly in direct proportion to the knowledge already obtained. What more dignified, than for a woman to possess a sound judgment and a cultivated taste in literature, to be able to appreciate the greatest productions of the human mind, to be well informed on the principal subjects which engage the attention of the world? What greater privilege than to be able to appreciate and enjoy the conversation of the educated and accomplished of both sexes, to be fluent and unembarrassed in the presence of the most learned and distinguished, to be delivered from the fear of committing disgraceful mistakes, and betraying the most humiliating ignorance in all companies, to have at hand some better and higher topics of conversation than the mere gossip of the day, to be able to relieve

the discussion of persons by the investigation of principles, to escape from the prejudices and parties of the present into the neutral ground of the past?

There is a prejudice against learned women, I am aware, but not against educated women. It is the surest sign that a woman is not well educated, if her learning or her knowledge is made obtrusive and disgusting. A woman is not well educated who makes a show of her learning. In nothing does a good education show itself more than in the absence of all pretension, and the most perfect simplicity and unconsciousness.

Woman has a right to a good education, because it is expedient for all parties concerned that she should have it. She ought to be educated because home is the great school of humanity, and because the mother is the first, the principal, and the most influential teacher. Her mind is the storehouse from which her children derive their ideas. She cannot open her mouth without teaching them something, either correct and elevated conceptions, or weak, silly, childish prejudices and superstitions. The child learns more from the conversation of the mother than from any

other source. How fortunate that child, whose mother's mind is a mine of wisdom, a perennial fountain of knowledge? Most distinguished men have attributed their greatness to the influence and instructions of their mothers. As life advances and temptations increase, the safest refuge against the multitudinous corruptions of the world, is the sanctuary of home. The greatest attraction of home is always an intellectual and accomplished mother. She will draw around her the gifted and refined among the young, and use the talents of all for the entertainment and instruction of each. Nothing contributes more to keep the sons of a family from low vices and dissipated companions than sincere respect for the understanding and the principles of the mother. Nothing is so sure a preventive of vanity and frivolity in the daughters, as true culture and real refinement in her whom nature has constituted their model and adviser.

Those who regard themselves as the religious part of society, commit, as it seems to me, a fundamental error in the light in which they view amusements. Some overlook the fact that they are a constitutional want of human nature, others appear to esteem them



as essentially immoral, others as below the attention of rational beings and wholly inconsistent with the religious character. The consequence is, that being an instinctive and indestructible want of human nature, they will always prevail in some form; and in communities where they are forbidden as a sin, they will be practised as a sin, and no discrimination being made between innocent and immoral amusements, both will be practised without distinction, and those who become accustomed to break over an unnatural, artificial and absurd rule of conduct, without compunction, will plunge headlong into all manner of vicious indulgence.

The capacity for amusement is one of the constituent elements of the human constitution. It is intended to fill up with innocent pleasure, the morning of life, when the powers are too immature for serious employment. The education of the senses and the training of the muscles, are carried on amidst the sports of infancy and childhood. This capacity of perpetual amusement, is one of the strongest evidences of the Creator's goodness.

When the body arrives at its perfection and the mind at its maturity, this capacity for

amusements does not die out, as it would do were it intended to extend no further than childhood and youth. It continues not as a constant, but as an occasional inclination. It alternates with the desire of serious enterprise and laborious occupation. By constant application, the animal spirits become exhausted, the nerves unstrung, the mind fatigued. In that condition, the greatest refreshment is not absolute rest, but amusement. There springs up then, if I may so speak, an appetite for amusements, which cannot be satisfied with any thing else. Under their influence the animal spirits rise and regain their natural level, the mind recovers its elasticity, the temper, before irritable and exasperated, is soothed, and labor, which had begun to be a burden, again becomes a pleasure. Amusement at such seasons seems to have the same effect upon the mind, that we might conceive of as accompanying a return, to the scenes of infancy and childhood, when we ran on green lawns or played in the plashy brook, or wandered among the forest trees.

From such recreation, there is a positive increase of strength to encounter the troubles, and endure the trials and vexations of life;

and these moral and physical effects leave no doubt as to the design of the capacity for amusement in the constitution of our nature. Nor are its social influences any less evident and benign. To partake of innocent pleasures together, does more to open the hearts of mankind than any thing else. Sympathy is the great means which God himself employs to cultivate the affections. Sympathy is the great bond of the domestic affections. No less than the ties of blood, it makes families one. Social amusements extend the bonds of sympathy. They counteract the cold selfishness, in which solitude and isolation are too apt to terminate. They smooth the asperities which arise in the rude collisions of business or ambition, and knit again the friendships which have been shaken by the hourly rivalries and competitions of life.

Such being the facts, to forbid amusements is exceedingly unwise. It is far better to regulate them by the measures of prudence and experience. It is the only way to prevent their abuse. To debar the young from them will always seem unreasonable, and tend rather to undermine than confirm parental authority. Austerity is never a good government. Nothing

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is good which alienates parents and children. Let home then be made agreeable and attractive. Let woman be educated and accomplished, and this most important end is secured.

Woman has a right to be well educated, because it secures her social position. When she is so, it is no longer possible for husbands and brothers to treat her as an inferior. They will find in her a counsellor and companion, to advise and sustain them in their difficulties, to cheer them in their solitude, to be the ornament of their prosperity, and to draw from misfortune its sharpest sting. The education of woman is the surest safeguard against barbarism and vice. Educated and accomplished mothers do more to build up and sustain families than the most gifted and successful fathers. The talents and eminence of fathers too often give a social standing to children of which they are totally unworthy, and which, as they suppose, renders all personal merit and exertion superfluous. Worse than this, too often upon the strength of hereditary fame or wealth, they transgress every law of morality, and set at defiance those restraints which public opinion throws around the young, who are to be dependent on personal character.

Nothing can counteract this fatal tendency but a judicious mother. She, by great watchfulness and perpetual exertion, may form the sentiments of her children, and set their habits in such a direction as to keep them in the straight and narrow path of personal merit.

There remains but one more topic which I intended to discuss in the present lecture, the security of woman's rights of property. In the lowest state of woman's condition she is a slave, incapable of holding property, being property herself. She is sold as property by her parents, and bought as property by her husband. Having a slave's condition, she has a slave's treatment. The next stage is to make her free to dispose of herself. This elevates her by making her equal in the original contract of marriage. In the legal arrangements of most nations, even the most civilized, there is a remnant of the old barbarism in merging the wife's rights of property in those of her husband. This is intrinsically unjust and impolitic. There is no more justice in making the property of the wife the property of her husband, than in making the property of the husband to belong to the wife. In some respects it is less politic. The

wife is much the more helpless of the two, on the occurrence of any accident, and ought, therefore, to be doubly guarded against loss and destitution.

The inequality of the rights of woman in property, it is to be feared, had its origin in the same cause with the right of primogeniture, in the power of the strongest, and in the fact, that men, not women, have always been legislators. Some civilians tell us, that the right of primogeniture was merely giving to the oldest son, peaceably, and by law, what he would have taken by force or fraud, from the younger and more defenceless members of the family. So the property of women has been given to their husbands, because they would have it at any rate. This is a poor account to give of the matter, but it is probably the best of which it is capable.

Another ostensible reason is, the danger of creating a separate interest between husband and wife. This is a danger indeed, for nothing is so sure to give rise to alienation of affection as opposition, or even an imagined opposition, of interest. Many a marriage has been the source of untold misery, by the

unwise arrangement of a separate purse. There is wisdom then; perhaps, in the apparent injustice of placing the income of the wife's property at the disposal of the husband. If it were not so, every husband and wife, who were both possessed of means, would have the power to separate and maintain their own establishments, the very worst possible condition of things that can be conceived. In Europe, where such arrangements are common, the greatest abuses and scandals are the consequence. Marriage, under such conditions, becomes a by-word and a jest.

While then the woman, though she have a natural right to enjoy the income of her own property, may wisely submit to the present arrangement that her husband should control the revenue; yet she ought to insist on the settlement of her property on herself. It is her duty to him, as well as to herself. In such a country as ours especially, where speculation and hazard are universal, and the possessor of hundreds of thousands to-day, may be wholly destitute to-morrow, it becomes important that whatever property the wife has, should not be swept away in the wreck of her husband's fortunes. Many families have

been saved, by this wise forecast, from utter poverty and dependence.

Nearly connected with the rights of woman in property, and the justice of securing it from the imprudence or dishonesty of her husband, comes the claim she has to just compensation for her labor. There is no more melancholy fact in the whole history of civilization, than the lowness of woman's wages in those nations who boast themselves as the most refined. In this respect, extremes seem to meet; and in utter barbarism, and the highest perfection of the arts and sciences, woman is made a slave. She toils not for a just share of the avails of universal labor, but for a bare support; and even where Christianity has its fullest sway, woman gets for the most untiring industry, not a support, but commiseration.

There are many reasons for this, which do not lie on the surface, and which must always be taken into the account. Mankind are supported by the income of property and the wages of labor. Where there is a thin population in proportion to the soil, there wages will be high, because there is much to be done, and only a few people to do it. The products of the soil will be cheap, because



there will be great quantity raised, and few persons to consume it. But every step in the increase of population does so much to reverse this state of things, produces greater competition among laborers, and raises the price of those things which they consume. In this increased competition, woman, who is the weaker party, suffers the most, because she is the weaker, and in the scramble for something to do, is the last to be provided for. Her province of labor is invaded by the other sex, and thus the proper balance of employment is destroyed. Spinning and weaving, once the exclusive employment of women, have been taken out of their hands by the invention of machinery. One woman, with the aid of machinery, can manufacture as much cloth as fifty could without it. So far then as the manufacturing of cloth is concerned, forty-nine women are thrown out of employment, and great distress would be the consequence, were not the fabric produced for about one fourth of its former price, and thus the other three quarters may be laid out in something else that the industry of woman produces.

As a compensation for this loss of employment in the production of the coarser arti-

cles of clothing, which has taken place in consequence of the extensive employment of machinery, there follows a greater ability to consume articles of luxury, which are fortunately, for the most part, the production of female labor. In this way, the immense wealth accumulated by the income of capital is again diffused among the masses, carrying comfort and abundance, as well as honest occupation in its way.

There is an increase too of domestic service, which gives a home and protection to multitudes of females otherwise destitute. There is no higher test of principle and humanity in a woman of affluence and condition, than the light in which she regards, and the manner in which she treats her humbler sisters, often more deserving, though less fortunate than herself. She may make them comfortable and happy in their lot, by uniform forbearance and consideration, or she may pour a double portion of bitterness into their cup by harshness, coldness and hauteur. If woman has any rights at all, it is certainly the right to gentleness, compassion and kindness, from the powerful and wealthy of her own sex.

## LECTURE VIII.

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### ON THE MORAL USES OF POETRY.



HAVE been detained much longer than I anticipated by the subject I first took up, the Sphere and Duties of Woman. The consequence is, that what I have to say of Literary and Intellectual Culture will occupy a much smaller space in these lectures than I had intended. Having at length, however, despatched that prolific subject, I shall invite your attention this evening to the Moral

Uses of Poetry.

The first distinction, which literature presents to us, is that of poetry and prose. As poetry is the most ancient of the two, it must be considered as the primary and most instinctive

development of the human mind. It is the first expression of what is in man, of the thoughts, emotions, sentiments, feelings, passions which are excited by all that he beholds and experiences in this life. Poetry preceded prose, because it preceded writing, and was the only form in which words could be remembered before any external signs were invented to represent them. Poetry preceded prose because it is capable of being set to music, which was a still earlier invention, while prose is not. Poetry and music both had their origin in the propensity, or rather instinct there is in us to express our emotions in words and tones. On the occurrence of a joyful event we give vent to our feelings by shouts of gladness. We repeat to ourselves in words, the facts, and the feelings which they excite over and over, because they have made a deep impression on our minds. Our exclamations when we are glad, reveal to us the origin of poetry, and show to us the Lyric Muse in her cradle. Just so is it with the low wailings of bereavement and sorrow. They too form themselves into music and poetry, but take the longer, slower measure of the elegy or the dirge. Thus it was that the

various feelings, sentiments, and passions of humanity found expression in the ruder ages of the world, and thus originated poetry, and thus in fact sprang up literature, the mightiest agent in the advancement of mankind.

But poetry differs from prose in its substance as well as its form. Prose is generally a literal representation of things. It adopts words which convey as nearly as possible a precise idea of the thing represented, otherwise it would fail of its purpose to convey true and just conceptions, and would thus be the instrument of deception. This is the form which our communications assume in the ordinary, unimpassioned intercourse of life. But let emotion spring up in the heart of the most prosaic, and poetry is instantly born. Literal words become no longer capable of expressing, not the things themselves, but our apprehension of them, the feelings we have concerning them. The man who has wronged us becomes a Turk. The man that has betrayed us becomes a Judas. The place where we have been happy becomes a Paradise, and the one where we have been miserable, a Pandemonium. Thus, then, a new language is invented, a language of symbols, instead of words. But it causes

few mistakes, for it is rightly interpreted by the same poetic element which exists in every human being.

As poetry originates in emotion, so through the mysterious sympathies by which we are bound together, it usually excites emotion of the same kind. Emotions are generally pleasurable. They rouse us up from the dead level of a monotonous existence, and give us a higher consciousness of our being. Hence the pleasures of poetry, hence its popularity in all ages and nations. As in its creation the mind puts forth its highest energies, so its reflex influence upon the human mind and heart is powerful to a corresponding degree. It excites the same feelings in which it had its birth, and thus, by repeated exercise it tends to give a preponderance in the character to those sentiments, feelings and passions to which it addresses itself. Hence the immeasurable moral power of poetry. It is the pioneer of civilization and improvement. It is the first articulate voice of that common inspiration which giveth man understanding. We are not to suppose that God has taken no care of that part of mankind which he has left without a supernatural revelation, that his providence

does not likewise extend to them. It is in his plan that the wise should every where instruct the ignorant, the strong should help the weak. Who but he endows the poet with an extraordinary measure of the same powers which he has conferred on all men? It was not then the reverence of superstition, but the dictate of sound reason, which has in all ages attributed inspiration to the poet, and has made poet and prophet synonymous with each other. Epimenides, a poet of Crete, is called a prophet by Paul himself.

But whatever may be the kind and degree of the inspiration of the poet, certain it is that the Creator has so constituted man, that poetry shall spring out of the better elements of his nature, shall in turn address those better elements, aid in their development, and tend to give them the predominance in the formation of his character, and the government of his conduct. Nothing bad is poetic in man. The moment the poet attempts to prostitute his noble powers to the commendation of moral obliquity, to the kindling of the baser passions, his inspiration is withdrawn, the wing of his imagination droops, and his celestial harp, though tuned to hea-

venly harmonies, begins to grate harsh discord.

Poetry then, is the natural language of the moral, the intellectual, the spiritual, and religious nature of man. Reason and the moral sense though constituent elements of man, are but a small part of his nature. They are intended to guide and direct him. But there must be something in him impulsive as well as directive, otherwise he would remain for ever at rest. There are the affections, which knit our hearts to our natural connexions, to home and country. There are the passions, those hopes which naturally spring up in our minds with the consciousness of virtue, and those fears which are the natural offspring of ill desert. Then there are the sentiments, reverence for the unseen Power upon which we depend, enthusiasm for the true and the just, admiration for courage, fortitude and magnanimity. There is within us a tender and undying sympathy with human nature, a susceptibility to pleasure in the contemplation of beauty, whether in nature or art, an awe for that mysterious Holiness which seems to brood over and pervade the universe. There are besides, plea-



asures of the imagination. The memory, or the bare conception of these realities, brings to us a sort of reflection, like the second rainbow, a milder degree of these original pleasures. Here then is the wide and beautiful domain of poetry, to express and thus to awaken the passions; to give utterance to the sentiments, and thus to refine and exalt them; to call into exercise, and thus strengthen the sympathies, to point out and delineate beauty, to call up from the buried treasures of the past the stores of memory and imagination,—this is the high and glorious office of poetry, for which it has claimed and received in all ages, the highest homage of the human heart.

The first sentiment which called poetry into being was patriotism. I ought, perhaps, rather to call it an affection, for it is too strong a feeling to rank with the fainter emotions which are denominated sentiments. Few of us ever become fully aware of the strength of those ties which bind our hearts to our country. There are occasions, however, which bring it out, and show us that it dwells in the very centre of our being. We live in an age of comparative peace. We love it

for its own sake, and for the advantages it brings. We abhor the scenes of carnage and blood, of violence and plunder, which war never fails to occasion. We live, moreover, under the mild reign of the Prince of Peace. Nay, we form peace societies, and meet together and talk with rapture of a universal millenium. But let us hear that one of our fellow citizens has been wronged, or falsely imprisoned by the public authorities of a foreign nation, let us hear that our flag has been insulted or our territory invaded, and the blood boils in our veins, a spirit rises within us that nothing can repress. The ignoble advantages of trade and gain are flung to the winds as nothing worth, blood and treasure weigh but as the small dust of the balance, and the cry of war rolls like thunder from one end of the continent to the other.

If you would know the depth of the sentiment of patriotism, go travel in a foreign land, journey on day after day, week after week, and see nothing but strange men, and stranger manners, costumes, and habits. You come at length in sight of a noble city. Your eye wanders in admiration and delight over its spires, its towers, its battlements and forti-

fications, till at last among the groves of masts which people its harbor, it catches a glimpse of the star spangled banner, in whose folds float the honor, the majesty, and the power of your country. Your tongue is motionless, but your streaming eyes and heaving bosom will tell more eloquently than words how much you love your country.

It was this deep and overpowering sentiment that first found utterance through poetry. The first song, of which we have any record, was chanted upon the shores of the Red Sea, after a great national deliverance. Standing as the Hebrews did in safety, and surveying the sea through which they had passed, covered with the wrecks of their enemies, human nature could not keep silence. The voice of joy and gratitude broke forth, and it spoke in poetry.

"And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances, and Miriam answered them,"

"Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously,  
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

Or as another poetess of our own times has rendered it into modern verse;

“Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s dark sea,  
Jehovah hath triumphed, his people are free.”

At a later period Hebrew patriotism spake once more through poetry, but it was in another strain. It was when the glorious ages of the nation were over; and had become a tale of other times. It was when the daughter of Zion, plucked up from her native seats, was borne away into captivity. It was when she paused in her journey to slavery, and with streaming hair and dust upon her head sat down by the rivers of Babylon.

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,  
Yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.  
We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst  
thereof;  
For they that carried us away captive required of  
us a song,  
And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying,  
Sing us one of the songs of Zion,  
How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?  
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,  
Let my right hand forget her cunning!

If I do not remember thee,  
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!  
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!"

In the same manner it was patriotism that first kindled poetry among the Greeks. It was love of country which led Homer to sing the exploits of the heroes of Greece before the walls of Troy, and thus to become the first spark in kindling the intellect of that wonderful people. Of Athens, the oldest poetic fragment we have is a sort of hymn, composed in celebration of the assassination of a tyrant. It was the standing dinner song for centuries to the whole people; and it has been said by one who knew human nature well, that if Brutus could have composed as good a one on the death of Cæsar, Rome would never have relapsed under the tyranny of the emperors. Soon after the establishment of the Athenian republic by Solon, Pisistratus a demagogue, by a mean flattery of the people, usurped the government, and made himself the tyrant of Athens. But though a usurper, his government was on the whole mild and liberal, and he was permitted to die in possession of the supreme

authority. His sons, Hippias and Hipparchus, attempted to tread in his footsteps, but in vain. They inherited all their father's tyranny with none of his virtues. A conspiracy was formed to rid the city of them, and re-establish a free government. Two noble youths, Harmodius and Aristogiton, undertook the task, and approaching the tyrants with their swords concealed in myrtle boughs, succeeded in putting one of them to death. Their plan however, on the whole, miscarried for the time, and both were seized and slain. But their blood was the seed of liberty. In three years the other brother was expelled, and Athens again was free. That event was celebrated by the following ode, which became inexpressibly dear to every Athenian heart.

“Verdant myrtle’s branchy pride  
Shall my thirsty blade entwine;  
Such, Harmodius, deck’d thy side,  
Such, Aristogiton, thine.

Noblest youths! in islands blest,  
Not like recreant idlers dead;  
You with fleet Pelides rest,  
And with godlike Diomed.

Myrtle shall our brows entwine  
While the muse your fame shall tell ;  
'Twas at Pallas' sacred shrine,  
At your feet the tyrant fell.

Then in Athens all was peace,  
Equal laws and liberty ;  
Nurse of arts and eye of Greece,  
People valiant, firm and free !”

It was an ardent patriotism, thus cherished, thus expressed, and thus inculcated, which made Greece what she afterwards became. It breathed that indomitable energy into her armies, before which the millions of Asia fled in dismay on the plains of Marathon and Platea, and made her by turns, small as she appeared upon the map of the earth, alternately the admiration and the terror of the world.

There is, beside the love of country, a sentiment deep rooted within us, of sympathy with our kind, which cannot perhaps, be better denominated than by the name of humanity. The best expression which this sentiment has ever found was by a Roman, himself a poet. “I am a man, and nothing which concerns humanity fails deeply to move my heart.” It is this secret sympathy, which is one of the

principal causes of our delight in literature. For what is all literature but the presentation to the human mind of the actions, the condition, the thoughts, feelings, sufferings, the joys and sorrows of our fellow men? It is not so much the gratification of mere curiosity, or the increase of practical knowledge, as it is the pleasure of sympathy, which leads us to read of the distant and the past. This is the reason of the absorbing interest we always feel in a personal narrative, perhaps above every other species of composition. We feel, that however long ago, or however remote the actor or the sufferer lived, he was our brother. A mother's bosom pillowed his infancy as well as ours. To him, home, and life, and hope were dear. The same sun lighted him, the same earth cherished him, and his prospect was shut in by the same surrounding sky. It is not Robinson Crusoe, the English sailor, that the boy follows to his desolate island, and reads of with such breathless interest through many a glimmering page, it is himself identified with Robinson Crusoe. So great is the power of sympathy, that when that lone adventurer finds himself the only inhabitant of that solitary isle, cut off from the world, and



all intercourse with his species, the beating heart of the little reader is almost as much concerned, as if he were there himself; and when, after gazing day after day in vain upon the unchanging expanse of the all-surrounding sea, and listening to the monotony of its sullen roar, a sail at last gladdens the sight of the exile, the little sympathizer is almost as much relieved as if he, and not his hero, were about to step upon her deck.

This strong sympathy with our species is the cause of much of the pleasure we experience in reading history. We cannot avoid, even if we would, identifying ourselves with the various actors in the scene. We engage in their enterprises with almost as much ardor as if it were still uncertain whether they should succeed. We fight their battles as bravely as if it were still undecided who should be victorious. This interest is increased just in proportion to the particularity of the narrative, to the minuteness of the delineation of characters, persons, costumes and manners. The beauty and flowing locks of Absalom, profligate and parricide as he was, interest us more powerfully in his fate, in spite of our moral judgments, than we are capable of becoming

in a much better man, whose name alone, written in the Sacred Records, presents us only with a dim abstraction. Poetry, which dwells in particulars instead of the generals of history, supplies this defect, and can take a bare event of history which has but a slight hold of the feelings, and by a few descriptive touches, make it highly sublime or pathetic. Thus the meagre outline of the apparition of Samuel to Saul on the eve of the fatal battle becomes, in the hands of Byron, a picture to harrow up the soul.

‘Thou whose spell can raise the dead,  
Bid the prophet’s form appear.  
‘Samuel, raise thy buried head!  
King, behold the phantom seer!’

“Earth yawn’d; he stood the centre of a cloud:  
Light changed its hue, retiring from his shroud:  
Death stood all glassy in his fixed eye;  
His hand was wither’d and his veins were dry;  
His foot, in bony whiteness, glitter’d there,  
Shrunk and sinewless, and ghastly bare:  
From lips that moved not and unbreathing frame,  
Like cavern’d winds, the hollow accents came.  
Saul saw, and fell to earth, as falls the oak,  
At once, and blasted by the thunder-stroke.”

We read in the Jewish history, that under the reign of Hezekiah, Jerusalem was besieged by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, with an army of overwhelming numbers. The inhabitants were in the greatest consternation, but received assurances of the protection of Jehovah. By some Divine visitation they were all destroyed in one night, and the event is thus briefly described; "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out and smote the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred and four score and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead men." This event in the few words of the simple narrative is impressive, but in the hands of high poetic genius it becomes one of the most magnificent pictures in all literature.

"The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

"Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;  
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

"For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;  
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still.

"And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride:  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

"And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

"And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!"

There is no other way except that of minute description to awaken the deep sympathies of the human heart. This is one reason of the deadness and indifference of the public mind to the condition and sufferings of numerous classes at our very doors. It is because they are dumb. Ignorance and poverty have kept them mute, and hindered them from sending up a voice into the literature of the world. It was thus with that

most interesting but neglected class of our fellow creatures, the seamen, until their condition begun to be described by one of themselves, whom nature had made a poet and piety made a preacher. I refer to the Rev. Edward Taylor of Boston. It is while listening to him, or reading such a book as that lately put forth by the author of *Two Years Before the Mast*, that the busy multitude on land learn to realize the fact, that human hearts beat in the fore-castle as well as the senate-house, and the saloon; that those who go down into the sea in ships and see God's wonders in the deep, though assimilated in manners and exterior to the rough elements which they encounter, are by no means destitute of the finest susceptibilities of our nature. It is in this way, I have not the least doubt, that literature is at length to be made the instrument of awakening a powerful interest in behalf of the poor sailor in the hearts of those who are able to meliorate his condition, and by elevating his character be the means of redeeming him from the cowardly and petty tyranny to which he is now subjected. Nay, there will be a literature for the sailors themselves, so that their monotonous and isolated

life shall be refreshed and gladdened by the pleasures of knowledge, of thought and imagination.

It is to this strong sympathy with human nature that many of the most exquisite passages of poetry owe their interest, which appear at first sight to be merely descriptive. It is this, which makes so thrilling Byron's description of the night before the battle of Waterloo.

“There was a sound of revelry by night,  
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then  
Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright  
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;  
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when  
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,  
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,  
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;  
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

“Did ye not hear it?—No; 't was but the wind,  
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;  
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;  
No sleep till morn when youth and pleasure meet,  
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet—  
But, hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,  
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;  
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!  
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar.

“ Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,  
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,  
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago  
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;  
And there were sudden partings, such as press  
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs  
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess  
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,  
Since upon nights so sweet such awful morn could rise?

“ And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,  
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,  
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,  
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;  
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;  
And near, the beat of the alarming drum  
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;  
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,  
Or whispering, with white lips—‘The foe! They  
come! they come!’

“ And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,  
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,  
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,  
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!  
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass  
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow  
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass  
Of living valor, rolling on the foe,  
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and  
low.

"Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,  
Last eve in beauty's circle proudly gay,  
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,  
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day  
Battle's magnificently-stern array!  
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent,  
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,  
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,  
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial  
blent!"

There is in man an innate and inextinguishable love of nature. There is a nice adaptation of nature to the soul, and of the soul to nature. There is in the soul an exquisite sensibility to what is beautiful and sublime in the material universe. It sheds upon us a thousand nameless influences when we are least aware. They are ever streaming in upon the soul through the windows of the senses, and sometimes pour in such a flood of delight, that the fountains of joy overflow within us. From our earliest years there is a deep pleasure in looking upon this magnificent world. The opening of the spring, the singing of birds, the flowers of summer, the blushes of the morning, a calm bright day, the pillared thundercloud, the farewell rays of the setting



of the universe and some more powerful  
being. His will is the source of the spiritual  
by all things.

sun, the winding stream, the distant mountain, the open sea, (the city's hum,) the forest's solitude, all these objects and others innumerable, have the power to excite within us emotions of the purest and most spiritual pleasure.

These pleasures decrease not with lapse of years, nor with growing familiarity. They rather increase with time. Nature is our inseparable companion, and her presence is the more dear to us from the memory of the pleasures she has already conferred upon us. Enjoying a perpetual youth, no wrinkle ever stealing upon her brow, and no paleness ever invading her bloom, she is for ever lovely, and even when our bodies wax old and decay, our souls, which share her own immortality, still continue to love her with all the fervor of our freshest years.

This love of nature is a perennial fountain of enjoyment. Next to religion and friendship it has the greatest power over us to soothe our feelings in the hour of calamity. When our hearts are wrung with grief, and hope is dead within us, when life itself seems almost insupportable, a solitary walk among the green fields and under the sublime arch of heaven,

has the power to tranquillize our feelings when scarce any thing else could afford us relief. Whatever the tumults which rend our bosoms, the face of nature is for ever serene, and we feel that her unfading beauty is the smile of God. In it we learn that trouble and disquiet are of our little sphere, of time, and of change, tranquillity and peace are of the universe, of eternity.

Poets differ from other men in their greater susceptibility to the beauties of nature more than in any thing else. Byron in his boyhood would lie for hours motionless and apparently entranced upon a tombstone which commanded an extensive and beautiful prospect. And no one can ever have read the exquisite description of Paradise in Milton's great poem, without being impressed with the conviction, that he, who in blindness could give such gorgeous pictures of the glories of the external world, must have had a soul most tenderly alive to the beautiful in nature before that awful calamity befel him, which he has so pathetically lamented.

“Thus with the year  
Seasons return, but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,

Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose;  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark."

As the love of nature is universal, so the pictures of it, which the poet spreads before the imagination, are universally pleasing. They are pleasing, because as works of art, in the same manner as painting and statuary, they present an image more or less perfect, of that which we are formed to love and admire. This pleasure is increased by the additional one of sympathy with the feeling, which the true poet always infuses into his descriptions. It is by appealing to this universal love of nature, that Thompson's *Seasons*, a work whose poetic merit is by no means high, has been one of the most popular books in the language.

In Milton, as we have seen, this love of nature amounted to a passion. It is strikingly exhibited in some of his lighter pieces, in his *L'Allegro* for instance, which, in the language of an able critic, differs from other poems as the otto of roses differs from the mere essence. In that little poem, his description of morning, for tranquil and sparkling beauty, has never been surpassed.

“To hear the lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull night,  
From his watch-tower in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;  
Then to come in spite of sorrow,  
And at my window bid good-morrow,  
Through the sweetbrier, o the vine,  
Or the twisted eglantine:  
While the cock with lively din  
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,  
And to the stack, or the barn-door,  
Stoutly struts his dames before;  
Oft list’ning how the hounds and horn  
Cheerly rouse the slumb’ring morn,  
From the side of some hoar hill,  
Through the high wood echoing shrill:  
Some time walking not unseen  
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,  
Right against the eastern gate,  
Where the great Sun begins his state,  
Rob’d in flames and amber light,  
The clouds in thousand liveries dight,  
While the plowman near at hand  
Whistles o’er the furrow’d land,  
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,  
And the mower whets his scythe,  
And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the dale.  
Strait mine eye hath caught new pleasures,  
Whilst the landskip round it measures;

Russet lawns, and fallows gray,  
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,  
Mountains on whose barren breast  
The lab'ring clouds do often rest;  
Meadows trim with daisies pied,  
Shallow brooks and rivers wide.  
Towers and battlements it sees  
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,  
Where perhaps some beauty lies,  
The Cynosure of neighb'ring eyes."

Such was the sensibility of that great man to the gentle, every day beauties of rural life, and it fills us with astonishment at the universality of his genius, which could turn from this visible, diurnal sphere, and create in the unfathomable regions of perpetual darkness, the sublimely terrific abstractions of Sin and Death.

In the more ardent temperament of Byron, this love of nature assumed a still more intense and passionate form. His description of the thunder storm by night among the Alps and over the lake of Geneva, has perhaps, for thrilling intensity of feeling, never been equalled.

"All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,  
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;

And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep :—  
All heaven and earth are still : from the high host  
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,  
All is concentred in a life intense,  
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,  
But hath a part of being, and a sense  
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

“Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt  
In solitude, where we are *least* alone ;  
A truth, which through our being then doth melt,  
And purifies from self : it is a tone,  
The soul and source of music, which makes known  
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,  
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,  
Binding all things with beauty ;—’t would disarm  
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

“Thesky is changed!—and such a change! Oh night,  
And storm, and darkness, ye are wonderous strong,  
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light  
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,  
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among  
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,  
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,  
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,  
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

“And this is in the night :—most glorious night!  
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be

A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—  
A portion of the tempest and of thee!  
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,  
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!  
And now again 't is black,—and now, the glee  
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,  
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth."

No where perhaps, in all literature, is the deep sympathy of the human heart with the beauty and sublimity of nature so vividly expressed as in this most memorable description.

Finally, I come to speak on that which is the main subject of this lecture, the immediate moral influence of poetry.

Poetry is the grand expositor of the moral and religious nature of man. All true poets are to a greater or less extent preachers of righteousness, and often when they least intend it. They utter the true voices of universal humanity. They give utterance in clearest and most definite expression to those moral convictions, which are God's primitive law written upon the heart. The soul of every man that is born into the world has a feeling of the nobleness and the glory of virtue. It has the consciousness that it was made for virtue. It has as deep a sense of the

meanness and the degradation of vice. These sentiments no personal misconduct can ever change. No man despises and abhors the sinner so much as he does himself. And no man has a heartier admiration for virtue than the habitual transgressor. It follows then, that the moral sentiments of good and bad men are the same. It follows likewise, that no flower of spring, no tint of the evening sky, can appear more beautiful to the eye, than moral loveliness and purity do to the mind. Mountain or ocean is not more sublime than incorruptible integrity, unconquerable fidelity, heroic courage in defence of truth and honor, than that self sacrificing love that is stronger than death. All these qualities are in the highest degree poetic, and the poet, if he speak at all, must sing their praise. Whilst he is setting them forth in that exalted eloquence in which it is his prerogative to speak, he is stimulated in his task by the consciousness that he is uttering the sentiments of all mankind, and will meet a response in every human heart.

But vice is essentially unpoetic. To the higher nature of man, the moral and intellectual, where poetry is born, vice is loath-



some and abominable. To name it even is accompanied by a secret shame, which damps and extinguishes all poetic ardor. As Balaam could prophesy only when he would bless the people of God, and found the oracle dumb within him when he would curse them, so the poet is visited by visions of beauty and splendor only when he would uphold the cause of truth and goodness. Vice is moral deformity, and the more it is exhibited the more odious it appears. One of the strongest proofs of the identity and universality of the moral sense is, that it pervades the literature, and particularly the poetry of all nations, and is nearly the same in all. The basis of the Iliad is moral and religious. It inculcates the doctrine of a Providence, of a Witness, and Rewarder of men. Homer collects the armies of Greece before the walls of Troy to avenge an atrocious crime; and the reader when he sees that ancient city uprooted from its foundations, and its inhabitants scattered into slavery, cannot avoid receiving the great moral lesson which it is intended to teach, the endless woes which may be occasioned by one act of moral misconduct. The Greek tragedians considered their plays rather as

solemn moral lectures, than as the means of mere public amusement.

Indeed, what was the whole fabric of heathen religion but the creation of the imagination, stimulated and guided by the moral sense? The chains and darkness of their Tartarian regions, the groans and tortures of that dread abode, were nothing other than the images excited in the imagination by the horrors of a guilty conscience. And Tantalus with his quenchless thirst, and Prometheus bound to the rock, while the vulture for ever gnawed his side, were merely the expression of the universal experience, that sin ever draws after it a long and severe retribution. The Elysian fields, where eternal sunshine reigned, where the flowers for ever bloomed, and spring for ever smiled, were nothing more than the symbols of that serenity and hope, which ever pervade the soul, when it has proved faithful to duty.

It has been complained of Shakspeare, that with his vast genius, he never attempted to make the world any better. It may be answered, that he has done more good than if such a design had been apparent. As it is, his testimony is unsuspected. He stands up

before the world as a disinterested and impartial witness. He looked deeper into the human soul than any other uninspired mind, and when he tells us what he finds there, we are more inclined to believe him than if we knew he made up his report for some ulterior purpose. Our disposition to believe him is the stronger, as we find there is almost an exact coincidence between poetic and Divine inspiration.

I know nothing out of the Sacred Scriptures, which makes a deeper moral impression than the play of Macbeth, nothing which represents more strongly and more truly the spiritual might of sin to destroy the soul. Macbeth and his lady, two strong and well balanced minds, are introduced to us, in the possession of wealth, rank and mutual love, surrounded with all the pleasures of refinement, added to the quiet satisfactions of a rural life. The very atmosphere about their castle is fragrant, and breathes of peace and contentment. On one sad night the devil of ambition steals into this paradise, and all is turned to misery and desolation. Macbeth, against the strugglings of his better nature, urged on by the fierce, indomitable, unscrup-

pulous spirit of his wife, in the full consciousness of the turpitude of the act, that it is in violation of the most sacred laws of religion, honor, and hospitality, becomes the assassin of his sovereign and benefactor. The very elements seem to shudder at the horrid deed. "The very night became unruly, the chimneys were blown down, lamentings heard in the air, strange screams of death, and prophesying with accents terrible of dire combustion, and confused events, new hatched in the woful time." But this was nothing to the tempest which then began in the soul of the murderer. The hour of retribution immediately commences, and no warning can be more impressive than the language of his guilty conscience

"Henceforth to me there's nothing serious in mortality;  
All is but toys, renown and grace is dead.  
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees  
Is left this vault to brag of."

The wife becomes a still more melancholy object. That indomitable spirit, daring almost to sublimity, is at length subdued by the subtle poison of guilt, and though before the world she carries a calm demeanor and an

open brow, when sleep transports her soul to the spiritual world, her body rises to enact before the astonished eyes of mortals the horrors that are going on within. How awfully is symbolized the undying remembrance of the soul in those "damned spots," which will not be washed away, and even when they are obliterated the smell of blood remains!

The exceptions which may be pleaded to the general principle, that the poet is always a witness for virtue, are only apparent. It may be said that Byron and Burns were immoral men, and have occasionally shocked the moral sense of the world as well by their writings as their conduct. It may be answered, that no where can they find a severer condemnation than out of their own mouths. There are other passages, where every principle is asserted which they violated, and which show that their moral perceptions were as much keener than those of other men as their intellects were stronger, and their passions more intense; and their prospects for futurity become blacker as we contemplate their moral obliquities, for we perceive that they must inevitably fall under the condemnation of that servant, who knew his

Lord's will, and yet transgressed it, who must "be beaten with many stripes."

The last universal sentiment of human nature which I shall mention as naturally finding expression in poetry, is devotion. No nation has ever been found so ignorant, so rude, and so barbarous as to be without it. The existence of a creating and superintending Power comes so near a necessary intuition of the human mind, that it may to all practical purposes be considered as such. All that we see around us, and all that we feel within us, bears testimony to the presence and agency of an Infinite Spirit, whose perfections are equally disclosed by the greatest and the least of his works, the spangled heavens which shine upon us by night, and the insect which floats upon the breeze. That Power, from the very condition of his being, sustains a near relation to every human soul. When the idea of God is once formed, it becomes in the highest degree poetic. To the Creator of all things we gradually transfer all the grandeur and beauty of the material world, and whatever of dignity and excellence there is in our spiritual being, till at length he sits enthroned amid the splendors of the universe.

And our natural conceptions of him cannot perhaps be better expressed than in the words of a modern poet.

“Thou art, O God, the life and light  
Of all this wondrous world we see:  
Its glow by day, its smile by night,  
Are but reflections caught from thee:  
Where'er we turn, thy glories shine,  
And all things fair and bright are thine.

“When day with farewell beam delays,  
Among the opening clouds of even,  
And we can almost think we gaze  
Through golden vistas into heaven,  
Those hues that mark the sun's decline,  
So soft, so radiant, Lord, are thine.

“When night, with wings of starry gloom,  
O'ershadows all the earth and skies,  
Like some dark, beauteous bird, whose plume  
Is sparkling with a thousand eyes,  
That sacred gloom, those fires divine,  
So grand, so countless, Lord, are thine.

“When youthful spring around us breathes,  
Thy spirit warms her fragrant sigh,  
And every flower the summer wreathes,  
Is born beneath that kindling eye;  
Where'er we turn, thy glories shine,  
And all things fair and bright are thine.”

But it is to divine revelation that we are indebted for the sublimest strains of devotional poetry. Without supernatural aid the human mind would never have attained to those pure and elevated ideas of the Deity which give the Psalms their surpassing beauty and sublimity. The Hebrew prophets, besides being the religious instructors of mankind, stand apart and on high in the literature of the world. Like the pyramids of Egypt, they are the imperishable monuments of another age, constituting not only the wonder of all time, but the inexhaustible treasure from which their successors have drawn their richest materials, as those vast structures of Egyptian art might serve as quarries from which half a score of modern cities might be built. As they were the brightest emanations of poetic and divine inspiration united, so has their power over the human mind and heart been unapproached. In them the soul in all ages has found the most adequate expression of its highest conceptions of the Invisible, the Infinite, the Eternal, of whose greatness and glory all human language is but a whisper and a breath. Take, for instance, a description of a thunder storm by David, and you imme-



diately find yourself in regions of sublimity far above the flight of any profane poet.

"Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,  
Give unto the Lord glory and strength.  
Give unto the Lord, the glory due unto him;  
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters :  
The God of glory thundereth ;  
The Lord is upon many waters.  
The voice of the Lord is powerful ;  
The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.  
The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars ;  
Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.  
He maketh them also to skip like a calf ;  
Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

"The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.  
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness ;  
The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.  
The Lord sitteth upon the flood ;  
Yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.

"The Lord will give strength unto his people ;  
The Lord will bless his people with peace."

How congenial the Psalms are to the deep and universal devotional sentiments of the heart, every well read, and well worn Bible is a witness. Next to the precious pages which

contain the words of eternal life, those will bear the marks of having been most often resorted to for light, and strength, and comfort, which are written over with the sublime and fervid aspirations of the sacred poets of Judea. And they have served as models for piety in all succeeding times, as has been well said by a living poet:

“Sweet harp of Judah! shall thy sound  
No more be heard on earthly ground,  
Nor mortal raise the lay again,  
That rung through Judah’s sainted reign?

“Yet harp of Judah! rung thy strain,  
And woke thy glories not in vain;  
Yet, though in dust thy frame be hurl’d,  
Thy spirit rules a wider world.

“Though faintly swell thy notes sublime;  
Far distant—down the stream of time;  
Yet, to *our* ears the sounds are given;  
And even thy echo tells of heaven.

“Through worlds remote—the old—the new;  
Through realms nor Rome nor Israel knew;  
The Christian hears—and by thy tone,  
Sweet harp of Judah, tunes his own.”

## LECTURE IX.

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### ON THE MORAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN.



THE subjects to which I have hitherto directed your attention have been of a practical and popular character. You have followed me with ease, if not with profit, for I have touched on nothing deep or abstruse. I am in this lecture to treat a subject a little more abstract, though in the end quite as practical as any which I have presented, The Moral Constitution of Man. I do it by way of experiment, that I may discover how far an audience composed of all ages and both sexes may be interested in a psychological investigation.

The existence of a moral nature in man is

early demonstrated by the rise of the consciousness, on doing certain actions; "This is right; I am justified and meritorious in doing it." And on another occasion, "This is wrong, I am guilty if I do it, and I cannot look on my own conduct with approbation." This power of distinguishing right and wrong, and its involuntary exercise is one of the elementary principles of the human mind. Wherever there is a perfect human soul, there this faculty is developed. The child, the first time that it tells a falsehood, feels compunction, feels that it has done wrong, it cannot tell why. What account is to be given of this fact? Does it see the reasons why it is wrong? By no means. It has had no experience of the evils which the violation of truth brings upon society, and finally upon the fabricator himself. All we can say of it is, that it is the will of the Creator, that such a feeling should spring up in the human mind as soon as the faculty of speech is developed, as a guard against the abuse of that faculty. We can truly say then, that it is a moral instinct implanted by God in the human soul. I know no reason why we should withhold from it this appellation. It

ought to rank with the filial affection, or the desire of society, which is developed much later, but the rudiments of which must have been created within us, or we could never have known what it was. The Almighty, in creating man, foresaw all the conditions and relations in which he was to be placed, and he gave him every power and faculty necessary to fit him for every relation which he was ever to sustain. God's universe is one perfect whole, every part of which is fitted to every other part. He created the ocean, the element of water, and likewise fish to live, and breathe, and swim in it. The myriads of embryo fish, which are formed every year, before they have imparted to them the principle of animal life, before they have touched the element in which they are afterwards to have their existence, have the tiny rudiments of lungs by which they are to draw vitality from the water, and the outline of those fins, which are one day to bear them with wonderful velocity through the waves. Go to the bird's nest, and you will there see the same prospective adaptation. The bones which form within those dark and rounded walls have precisely that combination of strength

and lightness which fits them to be the frame of a body upborne on the thin and yielding atmosphere, every feather is a miracle of wisdom considered with reference to warmth, and strength, and buoyancy, and beauty. In every animal there is a third correspondent, which resides in its spiritual part, that something, whatever it is, which bears the same relation to the animal that the soul does to man, an instinct which immediately prompts it to betake itself to the element for which it was formed, the fish to the sea, and the bird to the air. So I know no reason for doubting that the same Omniscient Mind, which created man for society, and predetermined to give him speech and reason, gave him likewise an instinctive moral law for the government of speech, a regard for truth. He thus established a higher communion than can take place among the inferior orders of creation, and made truth the basis of that communion, and absolutely essential to the well being of society.

It was necessary that it should be instinctive, otherwise it would come too late. Reason and experience were not to be developed sufficiently early for the safety of society. It

would have been fatal to man's social well being to have permitted each generation to learn by a succession of disastrous experiments that it is necessary to speak the truth. The obligation of truth then may be set down as one of the moral instincts of man, an ultimate fact which cannot be resolved into any law more simple, or into any other principle. All we can say of it is, that such is the will of God, that on the development of the powers of reason and speech, every human being should feel the obligation of speaking the truth, and should feel reproached and humiliated when he violates it. As it is a moral instinct with regard to ourselves, so it is a moral sentiment with respect to others. It is impossible for us to regard another who has violated the truth with moral approbation. We cannot help feeling for him a hearty contempt. As no sophistry can altogether excuse us to ourselves for violating the truth, so no apology can restore another who has violated it to our entire esteem.

It is because God has made this moral instinct and sentiment so strong within us, that the accusation of falsehood has ever been esteemed the ground of deadly quarrel. It

is a stain, which among men who stand upon points of honor, can only be washed away with blood.

But strong as this instinct and sentiment are, they do no more than correspond to the magnitude of the interests which they are intended to secure. The general allegiance of the human mind to truth is the basis of most of our knowledge. Were it not for this, the history of the past, which is now to us an accumulated treasure of wisdom, would be altogether useless. As it is now, in spite of the bias of interest, passion, and prejudice, it is mainly a representation of facts as they were. Men have felt in all ages that speech was given them to utter the thing that was true, and not the thing that was false; and, however feeling may have inclined the historian to misrepresent, the instinct and the sentiment of truth would not allow him materially to distort the transactions of past ages.

Truth is absolutely necessary for the general management of the business of society. It is by this alone that the most distant nations are able to carry on commerce with each other. They are able to do so only



because they can depend on their mutual representations. Indeed it is the instinct of truth, which enables man to be a social being at all. Were this instinct at any moment to cease, society would be broken up. The merchant, when he opened his letters, would be no wiser as to his business than he was before, he could do nothing in consequence of their contents. The newspaper, wet from the printing press, would be thrown away, for there would be no security that every article in it was not false. The stranger would ask no question of the citizen, because he would probably be misinformed.

. It is this primitive and universal instinct of the obligation of truth, which lies at the foundation of the sanctity of an oath, an usage so universal that it may be considered as an institution of Nature. The ceremony and formality of an oath can put nothing into the soul of man which was not there before. It can only call up and put in exercise principles that were already there. These principles, and they both may be considered instinctive, are the absolute obligation of truth, and the existence of an Omniscient and

Omnipotent Being to vindicate it. The universal existence and use of oaths prove incontestibly that man is by nature not only a moral but a religious being.

It may be said, by those who deny that there are any such things as moral instincts, that the feeling of obligation to speak the truth arises from the foresight of the evil consequences which would spring from violating it, in short that men speak the truth only because it is their interest to do so. But every human being is conscious, if he watches the operations of his own mind, that this is not the fact. Obligation and interest are not identical in the human mind. The interest is an after thought. Just as truly might you say that the mother embraces her babe with transports of tenderness, because she sees how necessary it will be for her support in her old age. That this may be the purpose of the Deity in implanting the love that is stronger than death, we do not deny, but that it is the cause of the affection is altogether preposterous. That reason may afterwards give steadiness to the instinct we allow, that foresight may afterwards and in some degree add a new motive to parental assiduity may be a

fact. So, that the conviction of the utility of truth may affect some minds, and make them more scrupulous in its utterance, may be equally true, but that it is the original ground of obligation is totally false.

The next moral instinct which is developed is that of property. It was necessary for the individual and social well being of man, that each individual should appropriate certain things to himself. Were not this the case we could never take any interest in any thing. That we ought to enjoy the fruits of our own labor, is an ultimate conviction, for which no reason can be given but that such is the will of God. The same principle applies to our persons, our faculties, our liberty, our labor. God has given us certain things, hence we feel that we have a right to them. Let a parent give each of his children a piece of bread. The instinctive feeling of each one is, that the instant it is given, he has a right to it. If one wrests away from another his piece, he feels himself not only robbed, but wronged. His outcries will develop his moral sentiments. His sorrow for the loss will be touched and modified by grief and indignation at the injustice that is

done him. All we can say of it is, that such is the will of God. He has implanted in the human mind an instinct of property, a sense of right to certain things, which he gives to each individual. So let one of these children make a baby-house, she feels that it is hers, just as much as an estate or an empire. Let another attempt to tear it down, she stands up in its defence, borne out by this instinct of property, which justifies her in the use of almost any means of resistance. If she is vanquished she feels wronged, so strong and instinctive is the feeling of property. But her own mind is not the only one which develops a moral instinct, and declares that she has been wronged. It is impossible for the assailant to view the matter in any other light. The same instinct which told the builder that the baby-house was hers, likewise told the destroyer that it was not hers, and that she violated a right when she destroyed it. Let one of these children attempt to force the other to do any thing, merely by the exercise of will, without reason and without authority, and the attempt is resisted not merely on the ground of will, but on the ground of right. Thus the same in-

instinct which teaches me what is mine, teaches me too what is thine. The instinct of property then, is just as powerful a teacher of the rights of others, as our own, shows us at the same moment what we ourselves rightfully claim, and what we owe to others, teaches us at the same time right and duty.

This instinct of property and right, though at first sight seeming a narrow and selfish one, has been the source of almost all the good that mankind has ever achieved. The world was once a wilderness, and man in a state of nakedness and destitution. It was the idea of exclusive possession and enjoyment, which led him to fell the forest and enclose the field. It was only the feeling that he alone would have a right to inhabit the cottage which he had built, that first stimulated him to prepare a shelter from the rude elements. Had it not been for this instinct of property, all the noble powers of the human intellect would have been given to man in vain. He would have wandered about the world like the dumb animals, the same from age to age, never appropriating any thing to himself, or laboring for its improvement. It would have been in vain that he had given him the noble

power of reason, which enables him to adapt means to ends, to form long plans, and then pursue them with steadiness, industry and perseverance. He would never have exercised that power, if the result of his labors had been utterly indifferent when they were finished. By giving man the instinct of property, which is gratified by possession even, without reference to use, man was roused from the indolence and destitution of the savage, and surrounded with all the rich blessings of civilized and cultivated life. It was this that stimulated agricultural industry, the beginning of all advancement. What human being would have caught and tamed the animals which are now domestic, if he could have no sense of property in them afterward, to use them for his own advantage?

The same instinct of property extends to our liberty and our faculties. Every man feels that they are naturally and absolutely his. On the same principle whatever they achieve or acquire is his likewise. Hence the activity and inventions of the artisan. Hence those wonderful machines which ingenuity first found out for private gain, but which have in the end spread plenty and happiness over the

earth, when their authors have been forgotten in the dust. It was the instinct of property, the desire to acquire and possess, which first gave birth to commercial enterprise, which constructed the ship and sent her on voyages of discovery to distant and unknown shores.

But we now come to a still higher achievement of the instinct of property. It was this and this alone which gave rise to government, itself one of the most powerful aids to human advancement. The instincts of truth and justice are not the only principles of human nature, nor yet benevolence, which is another principle that engages a man to do the thing that is right. These endowments, which I have already mentioned, enable man to see what he ought to do, and incline him to do it; and would always persuade him were there no other motives of action within him. But the desire of possession, which accompanies the instinct of property, may be indulged to the neglect of the sense of justice, which it begets. There are certain desires implanted within us, which correspond to certain outward things calculated in their own nature to gratify those desires. Those desires spring up independently of our wills. They are of

course so far innocent. We see food, delicious fruits perhaps, and it is impossible for us to prevent the appetite from becoming excited. But instantly the instinct of property comes up and suggests to us, that it is not ours, and immediately checks the desire and prevents us from being willing to act according to the suggestions of appetite. But it is altogether in the power of our will to choose which of these suggestions we will follow, that of appetite, or the instinct of property. We may stifle the suggestions of the sense of justice, and encourage the appetite for fruit, till at last we determine that we will gratify the appetite at the expense of the moral sense. Then every man feels that he commits sin. And sad experience proves in every community that the moral sense is not strong enough to induce men to do right. What is then to be done? The first attempt is for each individual to defend what he feels to be right by force. That however, will not succeed, for the wrong doer may be physically stronger than the defender of the right. But what one man cannot do, many can. Many individuals combine to defend the right against any one who chooses to violate it. They get



together and consult that universal moral nature which God has given to them all, and write out a list of those primary impressions of right which God has inscribed on all their hearts, and agree to stand by them; and this is the origin of laws. But as the whole community must have something else to do beside standing under arms to keep each other in order, they delegate this office of seeing that those primitive rights are enforced to a few, whom they clothe with sufficient power to accomplish the purpose. Thus it is that law and government are only the living expression and enforcement of those moral instincts, which are some of the constituent elements of the human soul. Thus it is that government is called in the Scriptures, and the language of the world, an institution of God. Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Polity, thus speaks of law: "Her seat is the bosom of God, her voice is the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power." It was in accordance with this apprehension of things that kings of old were called the children of the gods. In our own Sacred Writings they

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are called gods, and sons of God, because they are the ministers of that justice, which is God's, which went forth originally from his throne, and after penetrating and governing all things, comes back to perch for ever upon his sceptre.

Government is the means which, under the guidance of Providence, mankind have adopted for the enforcement of the moral instincts, and it is perfect when it enables every man to enjoy his own, what God has given him, in security and peace. A good government therefore is one of the greatest earthly blessings. It gives the widest scope to the human faculties. It invites and encourages man to put forth his highest energies, and placing no bar to his exertions, enables him to produce the greatest results. Under a good government a people advance with giant strides along the road of improvement. They are strong, prosperous, and contented. God intended mankind for prosperity and contentment, he put his moral law within their hearts to accomplish that purpose.

But it unfortunately happens that governments may prove false to the purpose for which they were created. They may through

mistake misinterpret the law written on the heart, or through corruption bend it to their own purposes; and thus power conferred to do good may become irresistible to do wrong. Good laws may be badly executed, or not executed at all. Or they may be incumbered by so many useless forms as to cost more than they are worth, or be attended with so much delay as altogether to defeat the ends of justice. Thus that which was intended by God as the greatest blessing, when perverted becomes the greatest curse. Abuses of government are of all things most difficult to correct. They become so fixed by habit and prescription that it is next to impossible to shake them off. So far are governments oftentimes from being the executives of the dictates of the moral sense, the purpose for which they were appointed, that they arm the moral sense of mankind against them, and the whole people rise in their might and put them down, and re-assert and re-establish the primitive laws of moral rectitude.

It is saddening to contemplate the infinite miseries, which have been heaped upon mankind by bad government. Think of the millions who live, and have lived in Asia, not

one of whom has ever known what good government is. What is, bad and unjust as it is, has become so fastened upon the people as to shut out of their conceptions what ought to be. The actual has been so long inculcated, and so long acquiesced in, that it has taken the place of the just, those primitive and natural ideas of right, which God originally stamped upon the soul of man.

To secure the performance of the right as well as the perception of it, God has implanted in the human heart besides the sense of justice, the feeling of benevolence. As he has given us peculiar affections towards our nearest relatives to secure the performance of necessary duties, such as the parental and the filial tie, so has he given us a feeling to correspond to our relations to the whole species, but fainter in intensity because the duties it secures are less imperious and indispensable. We naturally wish well to the whole human family. Where there is no conflict of interest, no previous injury or prejudice, we had rather learn that any human being is in health, prosperity, and happiness, than hear that he is sick, or in

misfortune, or misery. That the final purpose of this may not be mistaken, it is found that this feeling increases or diminishes in direct proportion to the nearness or the distance of the object. Sympathy, which seems to be a sort of involuntary benevolence, obeys the same laws, and springs up with an intensity precisely proportionate to our opportunity to relieve the afflicted. We read that a whole city is swallowed up by an earthquake on another continent,—and we are slightly moved it is true, but by no means violently excited. But let us hear that our friend's house is on fire at the other end of the town, and we are on our feet, and on our way to assist him, before we are aware. That there is such a principle as benevolence in the human heart for species, is demonstrated every day. It is shown by the species of eloquence which is most efficient in eliciting charity. It is by no appeals to the reason as to its propriety, or to the conscience as to its obligation, that the solicitor succeeds. It is by a plain statement of the case, by a moving picture of distress. Then the miser's grasp is unclosed, which was only clenched the firmer while reason and con-

science pleaded the cause. These two feelings, of benevolence and sympathy, which together may be denominated humanity, are a strong auxiliary to the sense of justice in restraining the impulses of the desires, the appetites, and the passions, which are excited by all objects alike that are calculated to gratify them, without reference to the propriety or the impropriety of their indulgence. It is often complained that these feelings are no stronger. I believe that what they want is not greater intensity, but better direction. God knew best what relative strength to give them. And it is now found that, weak as they are; they are sometimes turned into a channel, which injures rather than benefits mankind. Those immense charitable establishments, which modern philanthropy has raised up, are found after all to nurse the very evil which they are intended to cure.

So strong and so prevailing is this feeling of humanity in the human breast, that it was necessary to establish there an antagonist passion, to suspend and reverse its operations on certain occasions, and that is the passion of resentment, as it were, a rough and iron-hearted executioner of the stern awards of

justice. Were benevolence always operative, man could not carry out the judgments of his moral nature, could not repel injury, nor exercise that retribution which the Almighty has delegated to him for the government of the world. As long as God governs man by man, so long must there be such a thing as punishment. And in order to secure punishment there must be such a feeling as resentment, which suspends while it lasts the general feeling of good will which is innate and permanent within us. The knowledge of its existence, of its certain, unerring and inexorable exercise, exerts an immeasurable restraining influence upon the conduct of mankind, and ties up the hand from wrong in a thousand cases where the dictates of the moral sense would be totally disregarded. But it is wisely and kindly provided that it should be occasional and temporary, not permanent and abiding, like the more amiable sentiment which it is intended to suspend. And the generous mind, although it cannot prevent the feeling from springing up on the occurrence of injury, is disposed to carry it no further than to repel aggression and to obtain redress, then suffers it to pass as soon

as possible away, and buries the remembrance of it in perpetual oblivion.

Another auxiliary of the moral instincts in the government which God exerts over mankind, through each other, is the sense of shame. Its power is tremendous, irresistible, overwhelming. No man can stand before it, and it is capable in this world of inflicting the pains of hell. We are created with a strong desire of the esteem and good opinion of our fellow men. No discipline can make us indifferent to the opinions of others. When we have done wrong, the reproaches of our own conscience are hard enough to bear. If we had no other punishment most of our offences, would be amply avenged. But the idea that others entertain as bad an opinion of us as we do ourselves, is often altogether insupportable. As a general principle, it may be asserted, that disgrace is more terrible than guilt. And this fear becomes more and more intense as mankind become more cultivated and delicate in their moral sensibilities. This sentiment lays the foundation for that omnipotent engine of moral influence, public opinion, which perhaps does more to keep the world under the laws of the moral



instincts than every thing else put together. A man may endure the secret reproaches of his own conscience, but the frown of the universal soul of humanity is more than he can bear. And the Almighty, whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, makes use of bad men and bad passions to accomplish ends most beneficial to society. The moral judgments of good and bad men are the same with respect to the vices of others, even though the bad man may be guilty of the same himself. And even malignity and censoriousness God uses as whips and scorpions to scourge and keep in order the unprincipled and rebellious. This invisible, inappreciable, but irresistible power of public opinion becomes the executive and the guardian of that portion of the original moral instincts of humanity which has never been written, nor taken the shape of formal law. A very small part only of the moral instincts of the human mind, have ever been enacted into express statutes, because no political authority could enforce them. A man may be very bad and still subject himself to no legal animadversion; but he does not therefore escape. Though he go into no court, and be convicted

of no crime, and receive the condemnation of no judge, there is a judge which condemns him in every breast for the slightest aberration. And of the thousand actions we see done every day, nine hundred and ninety nine are influenced by regard to opinion where there is one influenced by regard for law.

Here then is another way, besides that of law and government, by which the moral instincts are made to react upon man and upon society, to restrain, elevate and purify it. That public opinion itself is constantly undergoing the process of elevation and purification. In this respect it has the advantage over laws, which when once written down, are apt to remain when society has outgrown them. Public opinion is amended and improved without any difficulty or formality. The fate of the bad man, the happiness of the good, the counsels of the wise, and the words of the eloquent, are ever operating to enlighten and strengthen public opinion in favor of all that is good, and in condemnation of all that is bad.

But here a difficulty may suggest itself to some, how can an instinct be enlightened or strengthened? Is it not the very nature of

an instinct to be uniform and unchanging? Is it not its very purpose to supply the place of reason and experience? How then can reason and experience improve it? And here it is that the two great schools of moral science have divided, one referring the moral sense altogether to reason and experience, and the other to primitive and instinctive conviction.

In my opinion both are right, and both are wrong, or rather as in most similar cases, neither party has taken in the whole truth. A moral instinct or intuition must be implanted within us by the benevolent Creator for our good, and must coincide with the absolute right of things, since the same all-wise Being constituted the mind who constituted the circumstances in which it was to be placed. Reason and experience will perceive that coincidence between the instinct and the fitness of things and the best interests of man, and will of course strengthen the sense of obligation to obey the instinct. But no reason, and no foresight of interest can explain the peculiar feeling of obligation, which springs up in the mind on the first presentation of certain moral acts. Reason and

experience will more and more confirm the obligation of truth, but can never explain the sense of guilt, and shame, and fear, with which the first violation of truth is accompanied.

Then there are details of duty and artificial relations of society, which are not anticipated in those moral intuitions. The sense of obligation with regard to them is elaborated solely by reason and experience, but it is out of materials previously existing in the mind. For after all, the power to see what is right, which resides in reason and experience, with regard to many duties, is altogether different from the feeling of obligation to do it, which is an independent principle in the mind, and seems to lie farther back and deeper than reason itself.

The sense of obligation to do what is right is itself an intuition, an ultimate fact, which cannot be resolved into any principles more simple. It is so because God has willed it.

Thus you perceive that public opinion, which is the aggregate moral sense of mankind, and the means of enforcing the moral convictions of the soul of man, is itself continually undergoing the process of refine-

ment. Experience is accumulating, knowledge is increasing and more and more diffused, the reason of mankind is becoming daily more and more developed. Thus the grounds of obligation are becoming better and better known. New force is added to the moral instincts as the reasons for which they were implanted become more and more understood, as the eye of reason sees farther and farther into the social mischiefs which they were intended to prevent. Those conventional wrongs too, which reason alone perceives, become more and more glaring the more they are examined, the more they are investigated. Vice after vice comes under the scrutiny of the public eye, and becomes blacker as it is contemplated, till at last it is frowned out of being. This process is destined, I believe, to go on with accelerated activity. This great office of enlightening and refining public opinion devolves on Education and the Press. Already great progress has been made since the invention of printing, every year is marked by some achievement, some inroad made into the ancient and undisputed dominions of sin.

But there is one element of the moral nature of man which we merely touched upon,

but did not pursue, yet which when developed, leads to conclusions of the last importance to human condition and destiny. The violation of the primitive moral instincts is accompanied not only by a sense of guilt and shame, but likewise of fear. All is not right, and something bad must come of it. Nor is this fear annihilated by the certainty of earthly impunity. It comes up in the desert solitude, and in the darkness of the night, and seems to prophesy some future unknown retribution. This fear has no reference to any thing in this world, and no account can be given of it except that it is the will of the Deity, that it should spring up in the mind. This fear leads directly to religion, for it is impossible for man to believe that his Maker would deceive him. There must be some reality to which it corresponds, and of which it is the warning. So when a man obeys the moral instinct, particularly if at the expense of sacrifice or danger, faith and hope immediately spring up in his bosom. He feels assured that however present appearances may be against it, the time will come when he shall reap a rich reward. That hope and faith he feels to be the voice of God approving the

present and promising the future. That shame and fear is likewise the voice of God, condemning the present, and threatening all ill to the future. These universal and unalterable sentiments of the human heart, reveal the moral attributes of the Deity. That vice is really culpable, is a conviction that we have, merely because it is his will. We cannot doubt it, for a belief in the veracity and goodness of God is equally instinctive and necessary. Our instinctive persuasion of his veracity is the undoubted ground of our expectation that he will reward and punish us. Thus our religious convictions grow out of our moral natures, and thus the convictions of our moral nature receive an Almighty sanction. He, who made us, made all things. He, who created us, sustains all things. He who made our souls, upholds and guides all their operations. He is the ever present Witness, the Judge and Rewarder.

Here then comes in a new moral power, that of religious conviction, of greater strength than either of the preceding, to enforce the moral instincts and sentiments of mankind, and thus to purify and elevate them. There are besides, certain sentiments in the human

heart which immediately spring up toward this august Being, such as reverence and gratitude, and demand expression. Times are set apart for the purpose, and ceremonies invented. An order of men springs up, consecrated to conduct these ceremonies, to make what may be known of God and our relations to him, the moral and religious nature of man, their peculiar study. At set times, and in various manners, they teach the result of their investigations to the people. In all Christian countries all original investigation on these subjects is rendered unnecessary and is superseded by the possession of a Divine Revelation, in which all the truths of religion are laid down in wiser words than man's wisdom teacheth, and enforced, moreover, by an authority which no human demonstration could possibly attain, the authority of miraculous interposition. Temples are built where God is worshipped, and these truths are statedly taught. Thus the religious element of our nature is brought to act upon the moral with an intensity which casts all other influences into the shade, and the Pulpit has become the great, the divinely appointed instrument of the elevation and moral progress of mankind.



Such then is the moral nature of man. It contains within itself the elements of the perpetual advancement of the species. It expresses itself in law, public opinion, religious institutions, and these in turn give freedom to his faculties, security to his possessions, control over his baser propensities, and wider and wider command over the resources of nature. Thus it is that politics, morals, and religion are the great topics of human interest. Legislation, education, religious instruction, are the objects which the philanthropist must ever keep in his eye. The Laws, the Press, and the Pulpit,—in them rests the ultimate hope of man. Legislation, Literature, and the Bible,—their influence is progressive and irresistible. They are all parts of one system, devised by Infinite Wisdom, to secure the temporal and eternal well being of mankind. The ministry do not labor alone for human good. The sage in his closet, the philosopher in his laboratory, the philanthropist in the public assembly, the author at his desk, the editor at the press, the judge in the court of justice, the professor in the halls of science, are all co-workers in the same great cause of human comfort, improvement, and happiness.

## LECTURE X.

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### ON THE PROGRESS AND THE PROSPECTS OF SOCIETY.



THE last lecture was devoted to the investigation of the Moral Constitution of Man. That discussion led us to the conclusion that man's moral nature develops itself in the form of law, of public opinion, and religious institutions. These in turn react upon his individual character and his social condition, continually elevating them to higher degrees of purity and perfection. I spoke of religious institutions as springing out of man's moral nature, because it is man's moral nature alone which makes God known as the Lawgiver, the Judge, and Rewarder. By reason he is made known as the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. But these rela-

tions constitute too faint a tie to be the foundation of religious institutions. They say nothing of futurity, and were there no belief in immortality, all religion would fall to the ground. It is only the feeling of responsibility created by man's moral nature, and the natural expectation of immortality, modified by the fear of punishment and the hope of reward, which keep alive religious investigation, sustain worship and public instruction, and thus give force and sanction to man's moral convictions.

Laws, public opinion, religion,—these are the means of human progress, the ultimate hope of man. As these improve, man will advance to higher degrees of perfection and happiness. If they are stationary, so will be the condition of the species. If they deteriorate, the hope of humanity is just so far eclipsed. We shall speak of them in their order, laws, public opinion, and religion.

It will not be necessary, I hope, to prove to such an audience as this, the immense influence of government and legislation over the morality and prosperity of a people. It will only be necessary to illustrate it by

examples. The physical prosperity of a people depends upon industry, guided by intelligence, and secured by morality. Man will never act without a motive, and the most natural and powerful motive is the hope of enjoying the fruits of his labors. This certainty, or this hope is strong just in proportion to the goodness of the government under which we live. Under a good government enterprise is kept perpetually upon the stretch. Every hand capable of producing is kept constantly at work, every brain capable of contriving is kept continually employed to invent new methods by which the productiveness of the earth may be increased, and by which the same labor may create more material for the satisfaction of human wants. There have been probably more labor saving machines invented in this country since the declaration of independence, than there were in the whole world since the beginning of time. A bad government paralyzes all enterprise by extinguishing all hope. It puts an end to all invention by taking away all motive. It makes a people idle, vicious, discontented, miserable. Under a good government men work together with

intelligence and energy for the good of the whole. Under a bad government the few use the many as mere machines to accomplish their own purposes, without regard to the general interest. Good government makes men, bad government makes slaves.

As a people cannot prosper under a bad government, so a prosperous people is the indubitable evidence of a good government. If you see a man growing rich, you are certain that there must be industry and good management. If you see a nation continue for ages rich and powerful, you are sure that it must have had good laws and wise institutions. Forms are not of so much consequence as it would at first sight appear. A despot, if he were perfectly wise and perfectly good, would form the best government. He would enact the best laws, and see that they were faithfully executed. And the best institutions, when administered by bad or incompetent men, may be made the means of ruining a nation. The welfare of a monarch, virtuous and enlightened, is so far identified with that of his people, that he has few temptations to go radically wrong. Perhaps the best code of municipal law, that the world has ever

seen, was drawn up under the inspection of the most absolute sovereign of modern times. Legislation is a moral science, which has no connexion with any form of government. Its principles are partly those of abstract right, the primitive moral intuitions, and partly the rules of action which experience has demonstrated to be most beneficial to society. It is a science which can be elaborated only by the experience of ages, and can be perfected only by the minutest statistical information. Has there ever been a form of government discovered, which secures the selection of wise, honest and competent legislators? Supposing we establish a pure democracy, and surrender legislation into the hands of the whole people in their primary assemblies, should we be sure of good laws and judicious policy? Let the history of Athens bear witness. Let the banishment of Aristides, and the death of Socrates bear witness. What is worse than the tyranny of a mob? What is worse than the domination of demagogues in the name of the people? Suppose then we adopt a Republic, in which the legislators are chosen by the people, is there then any security that those who

are selected will have the requisite knowledge of the science of legislation. Let our own statute books bear witness. The best lawyer will tell you that such is the ignorance and want of system in our state legislatures that a few years fill the courts with utter confusion, and make civil duty, which ought to be the plainest of all subjects, the most perplexed. In a Republic, if the legislators be capable, is there any security that they will be honest? Certainly not, when the hall of legislation is changed into an arena of combat for the offices of the country, where session after session is consumed in plots and counterplots to retain power, or to oust the possessors. There you may see question after question decided by a strictly party vote, and of course law after law enacted with no reference to abstract right, or the good of the country, but solely to the upholding or putting down the party in power.

The very rotation in office, which is the boast of a Republic, though it may be the best on the whole, is decidedly a disadvantage to legislation. To be an accomplished legislator, requires the study of a life. It is certainly a more important office to make laws

than to expound them. Would it be safe to adopt the principle of rotation in the office of the judge, and as soon as one set has become qualified for the duties of their station, to dismiss them, and supply their places from the ranks of the people? Steadiness in legislation is quite as important as abstract right. A bad system steadily pursued is better than perpetual change.

But am I a monarchist because I thus speak? By no means. The subjection of the fortunes of millions of human beings to the caprice of one man, or to the chances of his character and disposition is a most appalling thought. It is a risk which no wise man would ever wish to run. That one man should have the power to prostrate the prosperity of a great nation, is a state of things which every philanthropist would choose to avoid. Legislation is safer in the hands of many than of one, and safest in the hands of those whom a community choose as their wisest and their best. All I mean to say is, that even then it is liable to mistake and abuse.

What is it but bad legislation that has brought on our country its present distress? The states have borrowed millions from abroad.



But this would be no evil if they had been properly expended. If they had been judiciously invested, and only so fast as they would become immediately productive, no evil would have come of it. They would have been a vast benefit to the country. As it is, the different legislatures have acted without sufficient scientific and statistical knowledge, without a knowledge either of the cost or the productiveness of public improvements; they have sunk millions on millions of capital, and involved the country in debts which the present generation will not see discharged. I may be asked, if I think that the office of legislator would be any better discharged if it were conferred for life, or made hereditary? I answer; Not at all. The experiment has been tried sufficiently often. Nay, it is tried every year in the British Parliament. Nature's nobles sit there year after year beside the aristocracy of human creation, and while the wisdom and eloquence of the House of Commons fill the world with its fame, it is but rarely that a voice of power issues from the House of Lords, and then it usually comes from those who have fought their way there from the ranks of the people.

I am not disheartened by any dim eclipse that may seem to have come over the prospects of Republican institutions. I believe they are the best that the wisdom of man has ever devised, and they will give human nature a fair trial, whether it be or be not able to arrive at and maintain a high degree of virtue and happiness.

Mankind can grow wise only by experience. Every act of legislation is an experiment. It is tested by the suffering or the prosperity of the people. Faithful history, the records of courts and custom houses, furnish the result, and bring home the consequence to its cause. Every new experiment contributes to perfect the science of legislation, just as every successful voyage and every shipwreck alike contribute to make more complete the chart of the ocean, and render all future navigation more safe.

The importance of statistics, which is nothing more or less than the record of the good or ill effects of every law that goes into operation, is beginning to be appreciated. It is nothing but an accurate knowledge of things as they are, the physical, moral and religious condition of a people, the population,

wealth, employments, productions, the habits, vices and crimes; the number who receive an intellectual and moral education. These things are the very basis of legislation, and without them laws are enacted at random, and no accurate knowledge can ever be obtained of their effects. Without this knowledge, I repeat it, legislators act in the dark. They may do good, but can never be sure of it; and the amount of mischief they may occasion will be for ever hid. It is the first duty of legislators then, to ascertain from time to time the true condition of the people, to provide the means of obtaining from year to year, a tabular statement of all that exists, and of all that is done. Such a course would soon substitute the figures of Arithmetic for the figures of Rhetoric in our public harangues, and curtail within some reasonable limits those tiresome speeches which have become the opprobrium of our deliberative assemblies.

It is experience alone which can ascertain the boundaries of the jurisdiction of positive law and public opinion. There are vices, nay, crimes which positive laws cannot correct, and the attempt to legislate upon them only makes the matter worse. Thus it is with the

crime of intemperance, and it is nothing less. No tongue has ever yet told all its horrors.

Thus in one of the States of the Union the temperance reformation, so long as its operations were carried on by the instrumentality of moral suasion and public opinion, went forward conquering and to conquer; but the moment it sought legislative aid, that moment it fell prostrate, and there followed a melancholy recoil. Laws may follow, but they cannot anticipate public opinion by a single step. Legislative interference would have been proper and salutary, if the whole people had entertained the same moral convictions with their rulers; but until the thing had been brought home to the consciences of all, external force only enlisted the sense of personal freedom and independence on the side of vice.

But in spite of these mistakes, and indeed by the means of them, in part, I believe that legislation is continually improving, and is destined to become every year more perfect and effectual to secure the happiness and advancement of mankind.

It is, however, after all, but a small part of men's moral convictions that can ever take

the form of written law. Much must remain unwritten, and then it takes the form of public opinion. But it is not less operative on that account. Its influence is more universal, penetrating, and omnipresent. It is like the law of gravitation which unceasingly draws our bodies to the earth, or like the atmosphere we breathe, sustaining life while we are unconscious of its presence. To those who live in society it is inseparable from moral action. No action, even of the most trivial kind, can present itself to the mind without the accompanying reflection, what will be thought of it? Who then can estimate the moral power of public opinion, when it thus is made to pass its judgment beforehand on almost every moral act before it is determined to be done? How absolute its power is, may be learned in things in which it has not the support of the moral sentiments. It is shown in the despotism of fashion. Fashion is mere opinion, and there is a certain circle to whom is conceded the right of dictating that opinion. That is the constitution and laws of the fashionable world. These people have been placed in power by no formal election, they sit on no

thrones, they promulgate no formal decrees, yet their will, emanating from some secret recess, spreads like the circling wave over the whole earth; till it absolutely reaches the circumference of the globe.

This despotism of fashion is founded upon the strong desire we have for the respect and esteem of each other, and the fear, stronger than death, which we have of ridicule and contempt. And if opinion can be so powerful in matters of mere indifference, how much more so may it be when backed by the moral sense. If people can be made to shrink with so much horror from the false position of a riband, how much more sensitive may they become to the imputation of moral turpitude! Fashion is factitious, it has no standard of ultimate appeal. Of course there is no approximation by change towards perfection. But there is a standard of morality in the soul of man, and in the constitution of society, and every developement of the human mind brings out more clearly the moral laws which were originally stamped upon it. Every year's experience is demonstrating more and more clearly that course of action which conduces most to human happiness.

Let us then analyze public opinion, and discover if we can, in what manner it operates upon the public morals. Public opinion is the aggregate opinions of those in any society who observe, and think, and reason, and express their sentiments. In a community profoundly ignorant there is no such thing as observation, reflection, or expression, and of course nothing which can be dignified by the name of public opinion. Men have eyes, but they see not. Ears have they, but they hear not. Minds have they, but they do not understand the things which are daily going on around them. They suffer, but have not sufficient mental cultivation to trace the effect to its cause. They are prosperous, and are equally ignorant of the sources whence their happiness springs. They are of course insensible to the merits and the demerits of their fellow citizens. They cherish and honor their worst enemies, and persecute and punish their greatest benefactors. But in the midst of their guilt they receive our pity as well as our indignation, for they have the same excuse by which our Saviour extenuated the crime of his murderers, they know not what they do. At length there rises among them one who

observes, and thinks, and reasons. He discovers truths, which before lay hid. He calls the attention of others to them, and makes them aware of their existence. He traces the sufferings of his fellow citizens to their cause, and becoming aware of the cause, they unite to remove it. He shows them the sources of their prosperity, and they unite to foster and extend them. For there is no stronger instinct in human nature than to follow the leadings of a superior mind. The homage, which men pay to such a mind, is not man worship, it is merely an acknowledgment of their allegiance to universal Reason. They defer to him because they perceive that he possesses much of what they all possess a little, that inspiration which giveth man understanding. They receive and adopt his opinions partly because they are wise, and they can see the reasons upon which they are founded; and partly because they are his opinions, and are supposed therefore to rest on solid grounds. Thus a great mind has the power of creating public opinion, and this is the foundation of the greatest dominion that is exercised on earth. It was this which made the orators of Greece the real sovereigns of the state.



To this power Demosthenes owed all his greatness. His eloquence for the time controlled public opinion, his mind became the animating soul of the state. Do we not see the same thing in our own times? Do we not see whole States of this Union apparently under the influence of the mind of one man, and made to follow him in every vagary of opinion?

In ancient times the living voice was almost the only means of affecting public opinion. Books were few, and the power to read them confined to a small number. The wise man must not only be a thinker, but an orator, to exert an extensive influence. As societies became more enlightened, more individuals became thinkers and reasoners, and thus formed opinions of their own, and by discourse or writing, influenced the opinions of others, and thus helped to form public opinion. At length the invention of printing threw open this power to all. The eloquence of the pen became more powerful than that of the tongue, and the deep thinker and powerful reasoner might sway the opinions of a nation without leaving the quiet of his study.

The invention of the art of printing may

be said to have made the masses thinking beings, whereas before they had only the capacities of thought. To thought two conditions are necessary, a mind to think, and ideas to employ it upon. But how narrow his circle of ideas must ever be, who cannot, or who does not read! His own short and circumscribed experience is all the material he possesses out of which to elaborate wisdom. Of the distant and the past he can know nothing, and about their transactions he can have no intelligent opinions. The art of printing has brought home to the meanest cottage, the materials of thought, has given the humblest the power of becoming acquainted with the distant and the past, and has thus given them the means of making up a judgment on the various subjects of human opinion.

While education, or the ability of thinking was confined to a few, they had power to form in a great measure, and consequently to mislead public opinion. But as more individuals became thinkers, they operated as a check upon each other, they corrected each other's mistakes, they detected each other's fallacies, and thus mutually purified the fountains of public opinion. Not only so, the diffusion of education

tended to improve public opinion in another way. It requires knowledge not only to form and promulgate, but to judge of opinions. All communities have a public opinion, but in the enlightened and the unenlightened it is a totally different thing. In one it is based upon conviction. In the other upon authority. A man must be educated in order to judge of the truth or falsehood of any proposition. Without education he must take his opinions on trust. He cannot have any well grounded opinions of his own, and he becomes the mere echo of the demagogue who happens to have his ear.

I have now brought you to the point to which I wished to conduct you, the conclusion that literature and education are the essential means of enlightening and elevating public opinion; literature, the expression of those fundamental and salutary truths which are thought out by the wise and the eloquent, and education by which those truths are received, comprehended, and adopted by the mass of the people. Literature has a sacred mission. All wisdom comes from God in channels more or less direct. It is an emanation of that common inspiration by

which God hath given to all men understanding. It is the way of God's providence to instruct the ignorant by means of the wise. As he uses the parent to instruct the child, so does he use those minds which he has peculiarly endowed, and to which he has given uncommon opportunities of improvement, to instruct other minds of less wisdom and experience; or rather perhaps to think for those who are precluded by poverty, or toil, or care, from that delightful privilege. The mind of the wisest is at first a blank. It is addressed and instructed from without and from within. Through the senses God pours knowledge into it from the external world, excites its faculties, calls them into exercise, and reveals to it that hidden meaning of things which constitutes wisdom, and which may be said to emanate from God himself. All then that is known to the human mind may be said to be a revelation. It is more or less extensive and perfect according to the perfection and cultivation of the mind by which it is possessed. God then makes use of these superior minds to instruct those of less endowment and opportunity. To minds destitute of this information this instruction

is in no mean sense a revelation, as much so, as far as they are concerned, as if it were supernaturally derived. Thus it is with the truths of science. They always existed within and around us. But the mass of the people never did, and never would discover them. The solar system has been always the same, but the mass of the people entertained the crudest and most erroneous ideas concerning it. God raised up such men as Newton and La Place with minds peculiarly endowed to discover and then reveal the laws which regulate the motions of the heavenly bodies. Just so with Shakspeare and Locke. They were gifted with a deeper insight into the human mind. They saw what other men did not see, and their writings were to the rest of mankind a revelation of what there is in the intellect and heart of man. So it is with every original thinker on every subject.

Let me not be misunderstood. I mean not to infringe on the province of revelation, properly so called, nor to advance any thing into competition with the divine productions of those who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. I put the Bible by itself

distinct from all and above all that the natural powers of man have produced. I only wish to place Literature, the unassisted productions of gifted minds within and not without the sphere of Divine Providence, which ruleth over all. I mean to say, that such minds are raised up by Providence, and made the instruments of the most powerful effects upon their species, generally for good. They are the prophets of the race, and they recognise their mission in the impulse they feel to utter the word which struggles within them for expression. There are indeed among them false prophets, as under God's miraculous dispensation, men who have mistaken their gift, but they do little harm, as the inspiration there is in all men teaches them to distinguish the true prophet from the false. Thus the chaff is winnowed from the wheat, the voice of the false prophet dies away, while that of the true waxes louder and more commanding as ages roll away. Truth, order, virtue are congenial and delightful to the human mind. They are welcomed from whatever side they may be presented. Their advocates are felt to be public benefactors, and they receive the homage and the reverence of mankind, even

of those who in their own lives prove false to the principles they acknowledge. Falsehood, anarchy, and vice are abhorrent to the moral and intellectual nature of man, and are tolerated only when they offer some bribe of temporary pleasure or profit to the individual. Now literature is the voice of the intellectual and moral nature of man. The spiritual part of man, made in the image of God, is ever endeavoring to elevate itself towards its Divine original. It conceives ideas of Truth, Goodness, Perfection and Happiness, vastly superior to any thing which it has witnessed or achieved. This high standard no man realizes in himself, or in his own conduct, for the plain reason, that this spiritual principle is not the whole of him. He has a body, of the earth, earthy, drawing in an opposite direction to the spirit, dimming its high conceptions, weighing down its lofty aspirations, subjugating it to the iron dominion of the wants, and polluting it with the defilement of the passions. But the soul, the spiritual principle is above all these, and really despises them, though sometimes subjected to their control. The man of gifted mind conceives the possibility of something better than

he has realized or seen. The idea burns within him, and will not let him rest. As with the prophet of old, the word is as a fire in his bones, and he feels constrained to give it utterance. In that high utterance it is only the better, the spiritual nature of man that speaks; the passions, the appetites, the baser part of man, are silent. Their voice is not heard, or they appear only with that mark of reprobation set upon them, which they always bear in the presence of the moral sense.

High genius has an affinity with virtue, and even when borne down, as it sometimes is, by the weakness of humanity, it seldom desires to propagate the plague. And when men of genius sin, God makes holiest use of them, though themselves vessels of wrath. No man ever preaches more powerfully the blessedness of goodness or the deep damnation of vice, than the depraved man of genius. He is among the brotherhood of literary men what Judas was among the Apostles. While they are mightily spreading the conquests of the truth, there goes with them a voice hardly less persuasive from the temple where that lost and miserable man flung down the



price of innocent blood, and from the field where he hung himself in despair.

The man of genius moreover, speaks in the audience of that very inspiration whence he draws his own wisdom. He addresses himself to that moral and spiritual tribunal, which he reverences in his own soul. This fact alone bars the expression of all that is of a low and corrupting tendency, and makes the gifted author the minister of righteousness and not of sin. The result of this is, that the moral standard of even the most indifferent literature is higher than the common standard of life and practice, and thus is continually elevating the ideal in man, exalting his conceptions of the true, the pure, the just, the honorable, the refined, the courteous, by which he is compelled to judge his own actions, and after which he is perpetually prompted to strive. Do not the common mass then, thus receive, as if by revelation, higher and nobler ideas than they otherwise would have obtained, the image of a purer and better life than they could have derived from the imperfect state of things around them?

Such is the high mission of literature and

literary men. They are the missionaries of truth and morality, wisdom and refinement. Education is yearly bringing mass after mass of society within the sphere of their regenerating influence. It is difficult to overestimate the habit of reading in its influence upon the character. It leads directly to thought and reflection; and when you have taught a man to think, you have raised him to a higher grade of existence, you have elevated him from a sensual to an intellectual being. You have given him resources within himself, which enable him to unbend and recreate his powers without resorting to those sensual gratifications which are so full of snares to innocence and peace. You have put him in a way to remedy most of the evils by which he is oppressed, for you have prepared him to reflect upon and become sensible of their causes.

Is it objected that the masses cannot become readers and thinkers because their time is consumed in toil? I answer, such instances as the Massachusetts blacksmith, who, besides supporting a family by his sturdy strokes, has made himself master of most of the languages of the civilized world, altogether refute such

an objection. Is it said, they cannot procure the books? Their surprising cheapness and abundance take away the validity of the excuse. Besides, in this very thing lies the cure of poverty. Men are poor, in this country at least, from thoughtlessness, improvidence and vice, not from any inexorable necessity of their condition. Were all the laboring classes like the Massachusetts blacksmith, we should see little either of poverty or suffering in this most favored land.

Literature and education, elevating the standard of morality, purifying and strengthening public opinion, what wonders are they destined to achieve!

To arouse and kindle the intellect of this people, to send this reading spirit into all classes, nothing is so much needed as a national literature. I mean by this, works of genius, taste and learning, which shall breathe the spirit of our society, and delineate man and nature as they appear in this new world. The interest that our people can take in foreign manners, institutions and modes of thought, must be but languid at best; and if nothing else is given them they will not read at all. We have materials for a national

literature. Man is not here a mere fac-simile of what he is in the old world. Society is not here the reproduction of well known forms. The human race is here commencing a new career, under circumstances untried. Human nature is receiving a new development. It will naturally find new modes of thought and expression or in other words have a literature of its own. We have indeed our Mount Vernon, where virtue and greatness rest in glory and in peace. To that spot patriotism will make her pilgrimage, to meditate and admire, as long as moral excellence shall be held in honor among men. But we have as yet no Avon or Abbotsford, or Newstead, we have no spot consecrated by genius, and rendered classic by the emanations of immortal intellect. All these things are to come. But that they will come, I can no more doubt than I can my own existence. What form the productions of American genius are destined to take it is impossible to predict. Whatever form they do take will be national, will reflect our peculiarities, or they never can take the place of a popular and universal literature.

As it is, almost our only literature is our

newspapers. Of these we have the greatest profusion. Their wonderful cheapness, and the admirable arrangements of our post office, scatter them over the whole country, and bring them to the door of every cottage. The influence they have in diffusing information, and forming the young to habits of reading and reflection, is beyond all appreciation. The arrival of a fresh sheet wet from the printing office, supposed to contain a record of the most interesting events taking place in the world, is the strongest possible stimulant to curiosity, and daily engages thousands in the occupation of reading, and puts them in the way of intellectual cultivation, who would have suffered books of the most instructive character to be thrown aside and forgotten. They have hitherto however, in my judgment, been too confined in their topics. Political manœuvres and terrible accidents are not the only things capable of interesting the human mind. Able discussions on morals and political economy, would be found to attract quite as many readers, I believe, as the disgusting details of the watch house and the police.

I come in the last place, to speak of the highest influence that is brought to operate

upon the moral nature of man, to purify, refine and exalt it, the inculcation of religious truth. Religion is the highest power known to man, the most commanding motive that can operate upon his conduct. The laws can take hold of but few of our actions, public opinion can only constrain us to govern our external conduct, our real characters it leaves untouched. The eye of man is on us only at intervals. God looketh always at the heart. To him there can be no disguise, and every attribute of his nature is an omnipotent motive to us to maintain the purity of the soul.

Accordingly Christianity, which is the true religion, has been the chief instrument of modern civilization. The Christian church, which has embodied a greater amount of true excellence than the race of man has elsewhere exhibited, has been the salt of the earth, the light of the world. It has been the rallying point of good principles, the spring and fountain of noble enterprises for the welfare of the species.

The sabbath, considered as an institution either of piety or mercy, surpasses any thing that the wisdom of man has ever invented. Releasing the body from toil, and the soul

from the slavery of material interests, it consecrates one day in seven to man's moral and spiritual well being. It redeems a portion of this short life to thought, to reading, to moral and spiritual culture. Proclaiming a truce to the absorbing cares and sordid passions of men, it invites them to hold communion together as fellow pilgrims of time, the heirs of immortality, the children of the skies.

The Christian ministry, a spiritual order,—and some spiritual order the wants of man have demonstrated to be necessary in the darkest days and regions of ignorance and idolatry as well as the brightest and most enlightened of a divinely authenticated faith,—have been a body of men since their first institution, of singular moral excellence and intellectual cultivation. It was their sacred brotherhood, which issuing forth from Judea in the reign of Tiberius, and bearing as their banner the consecrated cross, the symbol of that embassy of mercy which had been sealed on Calvary by the Saviour of the world, broke the iron despotism of the Cæsars, redeemed from bondage the millions of Roman slaves, and put an end to the bloody spectacles of the amphitheatre and the circus.

It was **they**, who, during the ages of darkness and ignorance which succeeded the irruption of the Barbarians of the North, kept watch over the sacred embers of learning, religion and civilization, and were the first to catch and proclaim the glad sound, when the mountain tops began to be illuminated by a new and brighter intellectual day. For ages they governed the world, not by usurpation, but by the legitimate title of the wisest and the best, and the secular power was wrested from their grasp only when its natural depositories became sufficiently enlightened to wield it for the benefit of their subjects.

Their influence, withdrawn from secular channels, is only the more powerful for being confined to spiritual concerns. Their weapons are drawn from the armory of God. Bearing the shield of faith, defended by the breastplate of righteousness, and wielding the sword of the spirit, they are still a noble army fighting the battles of mankind against their spiritual enemies, superstition and ignorance, error and sin. Their great commission has not yet run out, "Go preach the Gospel to every creature;" and still the promise attends their labors:



"Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." They inherit the sacred and perennial office of Prophet and Priest. They stand up as the interpreters of God, the ambassadors of Heaven, the comforters of sorrow, the instructors of ignorance, the intercessors for guilt. In the pulpit, which is the throne of their power, they speak with an authority which is conceded to no other mortal, for while they utter the message of their Master they feel themselves to be, and those who listen recognise them, as the only medium through which, as of old, the Spirit speaks to the churches.

The office of the ministry yearly becomes more and more laborious, more and more difficult to fill. To be a teacher, the Christian minister must keep in advance of his flock, a task continually demanding greater effort with the development of mind, and the general diffusion of knowledge. And by some it is apprehended that the world is shortly to pass by the ministry, and leave them and their sacred ministrations in the rear of the march of improvement. For my own part, I apprehend no such result. I should indeed, were their instructions based upon any thing

else than the Bible. The truths therein revealed, like the stars in the firmament, are as far above us as they were above the generation to which they were first disclosed. Unlike to earthly lights they wax not dim with years, but become only the more glorious the more they are contemplated, and the more they are known. As the mechanism of the heavens seems more perfect and sublime the more it is subjected to the scrutiny of science, so the deeper our knowledge of society and the soul, the more profound will be our admiration for the teachings of the lowly Nazarene. His character itself is an everlasting Gospel to the moral nature of man. He that looks on him reads duty in more intelligible characters than were ever graven upon tables of stone, or written in the lifeless pages of a book, and he who sits at his feet feels himself strengthened to do, to dare, and to suffer, more than by the lessons of all the philosophy of man's device. Such are the influences, which springing from the moral nature of man, react upon society, and are ever at work to purify, elevate and refine it. Legislation, Public Opinion and Religion; Laws, Literature and the

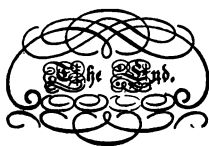
Pulpit, these are the sources to which we are to look for the gradual improvement of the human condition. Their power is becoming every year more developed, and at present we can see no bounds to the good they may effect. They have in this country ampler scope than they have ever had before. Here the masses think, they have the materials of thought. Mind here governs, not habit or prescription. Every school house that is built, every church that is erected, every press that is established does something to enthrone Reason, the Moral Sense, and Religion in the government of mankind, and to supersede the coarser machinery of armies, the police and the prison.

The course of lectures which has occupied us so long, is now brought to a close. I hope we may all look back to the excursion we have made together, not without pleasing recollections. Our general topic has been the human condition, that ever interesting, never exhausted subject. We were long detained by the sphere and duties of the gentler sex. In woman we recognised heaven's last best gift. We saw that though she was often destined to a thorny path, yet was it her office

to strew ours with roses. We concluded that though confined to an apparently narrower sphere, yet having the control of our earliest years, her influence is paramount in determining the character and fortunes of mankind. We visited for a short time the elevated and delightful regions of poetry and song, where sit exalted in the reverence of mankind the bards of other days, the early prophets of the future advancement of the race. In them we recognised some of our greatest benefactors, the solace of our solitary hours, the ministers of our most refined and innocent pleasures, the teachers of piety and wisdom. I finally conducted you to the more sombre and shadowy domains of Ethics and Metaphysical Science, man's moral nature and constitution. After a rapid survey of these elements of our nature, we came to the cheering conclusion, that their gradual development secures to mankind a perpetual and interminable advancement in wisdom, virtue, and happiness. If I have been the means to any of you of redeeming any hour from vacuity, or less useful pursuits, of awakening any emotion of innocent pleasure, of giving you clearer views of truth and duty, I shall feel that I have ga-

thered some of the richest fruits of a life devoted to literary toil. The past winter has commenced, I trust, a new era in the annals of our city. There is evidently a spirit of improvement awakening among us unknown before. The zeal with which the different courses of lectures have been attended demonstrates that there is wanting neither the talent nor the taste to provide and to appreciate the means of literary culture.

I now take my leave, wishing to all and to each the leisure and the inclination to pursue still further those pleasing studies, at which we have been permitted to take but a rapid glance, and expressing the hope that we may renew our acquaintance at some future day.



# LECTURES TO YOUNG MEN, ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE MIND, THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER, AND THE CONDUCT OF LIFE.

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